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**FROM CLASS TO CLUB: AN EXPLORATION OF HIGH SCHOOL
CIVIC-MINDED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FROM 1996-2011 IN
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**

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CIVIC-MINDED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FROM 1996-2011 IN
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS**

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to la familia: my mother Alma, my father Danny, Sr., my brother Daniel, Jr., and the newest addition to la familia Noyola, Alejandro Christian (my gloriously gifted son whose soul and intellect inspire the entire family).

Acknowledgements

“Alma” means “soul” in Spanish. The first person I want to thank es mi Alma, my soul and the foundation for us all, my mother Alma Sonia Araiza Noyola. My mother has been one of the driving forces helping me to accomplish all that I have. She unselfishly and with total motherly love quit a job she adored to help me take care of my son, Alejandro Christian, after my divorce. As a life-long social worker, she knew full well the impact domestic violence was having on me as a person and waited in the wings, always ready to assist me in making the final decision to leave that life.

Another beautiful soul I wish to thank is my son Alejandro. It is because I saw the world through his innocent eyes that I did not want him to live the life I had been enduring with my now ex-husband. Ale has been the epicenter of inspiration for me and my family. I could write several dissertations about his short but miraculous life. His compassion, intellect, and general funniness amaze me daily.

Next is my father, Daniel Noyola, Sr., without whom I would not have been inspired to write this material or to pursue the career I have chosen. In my youth, I was often upset that he devoted so much time to others, but as the years have progressed I realized that he was the father figure for literally thousands of children in South Texas (with over 5,000 Facebook friends, most of whom are ex-students). Today, I am also proud to say he is an excellent male role model and the closest thing to a true father my son has. Not a day goes by that my son is not enveloped in the love of his mother (myself), co-mother (my mom), and father figure (my dad). The multi-generational upbringing of my past is a reality for my son, and I am truly blessed for this.

These next two men have played no less a part in my life: my brother Daniel Noyola, Jr. and my tio (uncle) Javier Araiza. My brother and tio are the godparents of my son and the other steady male role models in his life. He adores them both. I often see many of my brother's attributes in my son, and it pleases me that he will have the wit and charisma of my younger brother. My tio Javier assisted me in Houston whenever I had to move out of my apartment because of issues in my marriage. He kept me safe and was the home I needed. I truly feel for other women in similar situations, who do not have the familial support I had. I pray for them and hope my story will help provide a voice to those women and men who find themselves in lives they just do not know how to escape.

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In my life, I have been blessed with so many wonderful experiences and tremendous people. Last but not least, thank you God for all of those experiences and people. Finally, take care of Abuelo Araiza, Abuela Araiza, Abuelo Noyola (que en paz descansan), Abuela Noyola, and all of my supportive Noyola/Araiza tias, tios, tiaabuelas, tioabuelos, primas, primos, etc.

FROM CLASS TO CLUB: AN EXPLORATION OF HIGH SCHOOL CIVIC MINDED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FROM 1996-2011 IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Sonia Adriana Noyola, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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Co-Supervisor: O.L. Davis, Jr.

Our educational system has long claimed that preparing students to be active citizens is one of its main goals. With high-stakes testing pressures, schools with high minority enrollment have been found to cut back social studies programs and/or implement a drill and practice fragmented teaching style. (Center on Education Policy, 2007; McNeil and Valenzuela, 2000). This research project seeks to understand how civic engagement opportunities were provided for, the impact of these opportunities on students and community members in Corpus Christi, Texas, during the last 15 years, and the ways in which these opportunities may serve to maximize civic engagement for today's Latino/a student.

Using oral histories and archival data as a means to uncover the history of civic-minded organizations in Corpus Christi, Texas, on high school youth and their community, this research project will investigate the founding of the organizations, the people involved in them, and the impact of these organizations as it is perceived by alumni and those with direct experience of the organizations. While a study of this type

may not be highly generalizable, it will provide new insights into promising civic education and engagement for previously marginalized groups of students. The findings of this research should add to the educational and social science literature by providing a nuanced understanding of how civic engagement opportunities may be tailored to fit into the learning environment of the high school civics classroom and beyond.

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Chapter 1: Overview of Study

Overview of the Current Organizational Structure of the American High School

The current organizational structure of the high school in America has not significantly changed since the early 1900's. High school curriculum generally follows the Carnegie model (Mercurio, 2007; Freeman, 2007; Davis, 1996) and includes but is not limited to basic courses, such as mathematics, science, English, and social science courses spread over a period of three or four years. Although contemporary high schools have become more open through desegregation actions and Title IX legislation, the remnants of the industrial era's influence on the American educational system still exists. Today, the single teacher classroom model predominates. Recent attention to high-stakes testing and the perceived need for teaching "towards the exam" has spawned criticism (e.g., McNeil, 2000; McNeil, 1986) of the harmful effects of this practice.

Throughout the twentieth century, educators and activists envisioned schools that would have a strong civic component (e.g., Niemi and Junn, 1998; Freire, 1970; Bruner, 1961; Dewey, 1916). Even earlier, the belief that educated people could throw off the yoke of tyranny was discussed by one of our earliest Presidents, Thomas Jefferson, who said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be" (Jefferson, as quoted in Delli, Carpini & Keeler 1996, p. 1). However, a steady argument in both the educational and political science literatures focuses on the ignorance and apathy of the American voting population. The political science research demonstrates that certain demographic indicators can predict the likelihood of participation vs. non-participation. Generally the "have-nots" (lower

educational status, lower socioeconomic status, minorities, the young, etc.) are less likely to participate electorally than the “haves” (more education, higher level of incomes, Anglo, older voters, etc.). Years of debate have surrounded the question of whether voters are rational actors (see, for example, Bixby and Pace, 2008; Wolfers, 2002; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). Combine this observation with the perceived decline of the quality of schools as a reoccurring theme in the media and warnings from the Department of Education about the erosion of our educational system (U.S. Department of Education, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1983), and the need for action to change the nature of schooling becomes apparent.

Democratic strength rests on active citizen participation. For a democracy to move forward, individuals must possess skills that enable them to gather information, process information, then form a plan of action and, of course, act. In Texas schools, we question whether these concepts and skills are infused in a one-semester high school government/civics course. This reasoning notwithstanding, changes to bring civic deliberation and participation are a commonplace advocacy among educators (Macedo, 2006; Macedo, 2000).

Statement of Problem

The Hispanic population in Texas has risen steadily over the last decade, but educational attainment levels of Hispanic students have been lower for minority than majority Anglo students. From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of Anglos residing in Texas fell from approximately 60% to 52%, whereas the Hispanic population rose from

approximately 25% to 32%, and the African-American population maintained its position with approximately 11% of the population (Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer, 2009). Texas' minority population has suffered disproportionate levels of poverty and discrimination in comparison with their Anglo counterparts for decades (Blanton, 2004; San Miguel, 2001; Orenlas, 1993; San Miguel, 1987). Some researchers suggest that this discrepancy has a physical and mental health impact on the youth of the region (Flores, 2007; Ready, 1981).

The research does not suggest, however, that citizens in the area have become resigned to a completely passive role on issues pertaining to social injustice due to lack of resources. For instance, legal battles that occurred at the local level over equal political representation, i.e. single member districts (*Alonzo v. Jones*, 1983; *Alonzo v. City of Corpus Christi*, 1995), and school desegregation and busing issues (*Cisneros v. CCISD*, 1972; Saavedra, 1976) have been key issues that have brought about political mobilization among the local area Latino population. Homegrown civil rights organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), which was formed in 1929, and the American GI Forum (AGIF) formed in 1948, have assisted with local, state, and national court cases. Despite the assistance of organizations such as LULAC and AGIF, however, poverty and lower standards of living have persisted in historically poor Latino communities (http://www.ucdc.edu/faculty/Voting_Rights/Papers/6%20-%20Gambitta%20et%20al.pdf; Ready, 1981). In addition, this population is generally characterized by low socioeconomic status and low levels of educational

attainment, which would indicate a lack of participation at the ballot box according to political science research (Rosentone & Hansen, 1993; Wolfinger & Rosentone, 1980).

Purpose and Significance of Study

First and foremost, this study is important because it provides a different lens through which to study civic engagement. Many educational and political science researchers have written about the declining civic engagement and electoral participation in the United States (Bixby and Pace, 2008; Putnam, 2000; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Teixeira, 1992). Democratic and educational theorists (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Ravitch, 2001; Putnam, 1993; Texiera, 1992) discuss a need to increasing voter participation, enhancing educational opportunities, and building social capital must be addressed.

One way to build social capital is through the ability to understand institutions and human experience. A human being cannot help but be exposed to several institutions in their lifetime: families, schools, religion, and other organizations. Institutionalists in the social sciences have researched many institutional tools that allow organizations to thrive and operate in a more efficient manner, such as incentives, hierachical structure, the extension of the shadow of the future, property rights, and notions of trust (Miller, 1992; Knight, 1992; Ostrom, 1990; North, 1990; Olson, 1971). Institutions and organizations are a means by which to participate civically. Additionally, institutions create informational shortcuts and allow people to gather greater quantities of information than they would normally be able to accumulate on their own (Gabel, 1998). Finally, institutions can impact the level by which civic participation occurs in a society

and can deny or provide access to participation efforts. Younger members of society may feel alienated in their efforts to achieve civic incorporation, as many of our entry points for participation and access in society are determined by age, such as voting (18 years of age) and running for elected office (TX Representative, 21 years of age; US Representative, 25 years of age; TX Senator, 26 years of age; US Senate, 30 years of age; and US President, 35 years of age).

Although research has been conducted on the issue of adolescent civic participation, the civic participation literature that focuses on adolescents, as with much of the political science and education literature, has focused on a black/white dichotomy in the U.S. population. In addition, most political behavior research concentrates on electoral behavior. On the other hand, matters having to do with course offerings in high schools should also be the subject of research. This study seeks to (1) increase the information on civic engagement opportunities for Latino students; (2) expand the notion of civic participation to include not only electoral but also extra-electoral practices; and (3) to shift the conversation of what civic education can be through an inspirational story.

The focus of this study is the impact of civic organizations on high school students who live in an overlooked area and comprise a forgotten population (South Texas Latinos/Mexican-Americans). In addition to providing the history of these civic-minded school organizations, this study will also yield much-needed information about whether the organizations actually encouraged students to become civically engaged, or if they simply reinforced the notion of civic engagement among those who already possessed the demographics that predict civic engagement.

The study presents an historical portrayal and analysis of the earliest to the most recent civic-minded student organizations in the Corpus Christi area: West Oso, Moody, South Park, and Collegiate High Schools. This West Oso Civic Minded Seniors (WOCMS) organization was a precursor to the other civic-minded organizations (Moody CMS, South Park CMS, and Collegiate CMS) that have developed in South Texas. (<http://www.caller.com/news/2009/apr/04/inspiring-teaching-family-finalists/>) Through oral history interviews and archival data collection, key players in the history of the organizations will have a voice in the construction of the narrative. In addition, an analysis of what appears to work within the organization and the needs that each addresses, as well as a discussion of the potential improvement of civic education programs and staff development recommendations will constitute the concluding chapter of this research. These recommendations can be utilized by educators and administrators in the field to enhance or begin similar civic education programs and may provide useful insights for teacher educators and researchers regarding active civic education curricula and experiences. The appendix will provide lesson plans from the various teachers/sponsors of the organizations for others to utilize and modify as needed for their own practical use in the classroom.

This research study is personal. All of my life I have lived with a passion for education, politics, and music. The passion for education has been instilled in me through my family. From a very early age, I knew I was going to attend college. My parents came from families in which they were not only the first-generation bachelor's

and master's graduates, but they were also first-generation high school graduates. As a result of their support, my brother and I would both go on to receive graduate degrees.

My enthusiasm for participation in the governmental process began at a relatively young age. At the age of five, I helped my family members at a local voting precinct with the campaign of a man who would become the first Mexican-American County Attorney in Nueces County. Also, he was an alumnus of West Oso High School, and my father supported his candidacy. I did not understand the magnitude of what we were doing; that level of comprehension would take several years to mature. Since then, I have seen many more Nueces County "firsts," but most recently, I have been astonished by the unprecedented work in civic education undertaken by my father at Moody High School in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Daniel Noyola, Sr., has established a group of civic-minded seniors who not only learn the state required TEKS curriculum, but they are also able to live and breathe their learning processes. His students have undertaken classroom government projects that assist their very own communities. For example, one year the students believed that the infrastructure (the lack of sidewalks, curbs, and gutters) in their neighborhoods was deplorable. Thus, they garnered more than 1,400 signatures on a petition that they presented to various city agencies, staffers, and elected officials. Eventually, the students were responsible for obtaining millions of dollars in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the Sunnybrook-Manshiem area. These CDBG funds were to improve the very infrastructure problems about which these seniors were distraught.

The initiatives and drive of these seniors reminded me of a deep love of music I have — a sensitivity encouraged by my family. Music has been an inspirational tool that has allowed me to overcome many obstacles in my life. The deaths of loved ones and the trials and tribulations of everyday living have all been eased with music. I am one of the only people in my family who cannot “carry a tune,” and this has always saddened me. My father, paternal grandfather, aunts, uncles, and cousins were always able to lift my spirits through song with their inspirational voices.

Eventually, I found a different way to use my voice to inspire while working for the LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) National Educational Service Center (LNESEC). There I realized that I had the gift to inspire young Mexican-American and African-American students with my vocalization of history, politics, and life’s endless possibilities. It may not have been through song, but it was with my voice — just as the Moody students had used their voices through participation in civic-minded organizations.

In our family, there is a long legacy of social workers, activists, and teachers. After working at LNESEC, I knew that I wanted to pursue a career working in education. At first, I decided to move from my hometown of Corpus Christi to “*El Valle*” (the Valley), a region of South Texas. There, I was able to experience working in a college environment at the University of Texas-Pan American. I delivered presentations to students, staff, and faculty and gained experience in organization building in my role as advisor to the Student Government Association. I realized that whatever educational

career path I chose, it had to be one in which I could work with students directly to help them mobilize their organizational endeavors.

All of these experiences have led me to the fascination I have with the work of my professional mentor, my father Daniel Noyola, Sr. The Moody Civic Minded Students, now in their 12th year of existence, have created legacies but are also the product of legacies from before their time. The origin of those legacies, the ways in which they inspired this group, and the many accomplishments of the students who created the legacies is the point at which my research begins. The present research seeks to understand the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How and why did the Civic Minded Student Organization(s) develop? What is the evolution of each organization from the founder to its new chapters?
2. What types of civic engagement activities were offered to students, and can these activities be utilized in other classrooms?
3. What issues were addressed by these organizations, and what impact did they have on the community at large?

Oral History Research

Oral history as a method is a tool for historiography (Yow, 1997). However, “memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved” (Ritchie, 2003). The use of recorded oral histories as a means of research expanded in the 1960’s and 1970’s when inexpensive recording devices became available. Italian

researcher Alessandro Portelli studied the role of memory and its accuracy in the oral history process. In his view, memories are mutable. Interpretations of past experiences can change, as the person accepts or rejects previous filters of information processing. He showed that the need to verify events from multiple voices and sources is of importance (Portelli, 2007; Portelli, 1991). Additional issues, such as who is entitled to speak for the past, are also being explored in oral history research (Hodgkin and Radstone, 2005). Therefore, it is essential to obtain multiple sources and voices in the accounting of events for research. (A. Portelli, 2007; Boschma, Yonge, Mychajlunow, 2003; VR Yow, 1994; DA Ritchie, 2003; E. Tonkin, 1993; Portelli, 1991)

Oral history creates an outlet for in-depth exploration. During the interviewing process, a researcher can explore not only the information he or she is seeking but also data about the individual being interviewed. As Yow (1997) points out, unlike an unchangeable survey instrument, the oral history allows for “[t]he possibility of discovering something not even thought of before” (p. 6). Questions we did not know to ask can arise and lead us to new discoveries. We can learn which socializing agents and which incidents most influenced our interviewees’ perceptions of an event. It is from these interviews that thick description, a term created by ethnographer Clifford Geertz, is possible. The researcher can get not one glimmer of a world but the bright shining light of many who experienced the event and, in the process, uncover a tremendous amount of detail. What the qualitative researcher is able to reveal that quantitative data cannot is the intricacies of “a way of life by studying the people who live it and asking them what they think about their experiences” (Yow, p. 7).

In addition, in relationship to accuracy, there are issues involved in obtaining the consent of interviewees (Boschma, Yonge, Mychajlunow, 2003; Ritchie, 2003). All of the interviewees in this oral history endeavor were provided a detailed consent form. In order to protect anonymity, each person was given the option of using a pseudonym. After each interview, transcriptions were done by an independent transcriber.

Oral History Value

Stories of Chicano/Mexican-American civic organizations are a valuable part of collective action endeavors in history. As time progresses, however, the ability to pinpoint key players becomes more difficult. It is therefore essential to tell the stories sought by this research before these fade from memory. Additionally, very little oral history research has been conducted on Mexican-American civic organization participation and its key players. This research project allows for an increase in knowledge in the area of Latino students, as most political science literature as well as some educational literature focus solely on black/white dichotomies.

Selection and Consent of Interviewees

A major concern in terms of meeting with interviewees was their location. I needed to ascertain whether they could be reached via a car trip and whether they could be available for at least one uninterrupted hour. Interviewees were not directly selected; instead, a snowball sampling technique was employed, which is a referral process. I would ask for a referral from one interviewee and then contact the referral to see if an interview would be possible. Arrangements for interviews were based on interviewee

needs and time constraints. Some interviewees were contacted a second time to clarify information via telephone calls and or emails based on their availability (some lived out of state, others were traveling or had fallen ill).

Special care was taken to receive consent from individuals. Some, as they still live and work in the Corpus Christi area, wished to remain anonymous, and they were assured that a pseudonym would be used to identify their comments if quoted (see the “Pseudonyms” section for further details). If the interviewee could not conduct an in-person interview, the consent form was sent via email, and a confirmation as well as an interview questionnaire was sent electronically. For some, the interviews were conducted via phone calls, as the interviewees preferred to talk with the interviewer instead of typing out their answers via the electronic form.

Pseudonyms

Although Corpus Christi, Texas, is an ample-sized city of over 250,000, many of the social, political, and educational movers and shakers interviewed for this dissertation all know each other and work together and with others in the community. Therefore, knowing multiple parties involved, many of the interviewees preferred to utilize pseudonyms. In addition, several of the students interviewed have obtained or would like to obtain positions in various social, political, and educational institutions in the city. Therefore, the option of having a pseudonym was created to protect those who wanted to participate but did not feel comfortable having their name in print. Finally, due to the existing divisions between two families, specifically, the Araiza and Noyola families, not

every family member was willing to have portions of their interview quoted. Two Araiza family members allowed their interviews to be used for background information but did not want to have their names, even in pseudonym form, in the dissertation.

Participants

In order to develop a portrayal of the Civic Minded Students Organization and its evolution, I first sought out its founder, Daniel Noyola, Sr., my father. After interviewing him and my brother, Daniel Noyola, Jr., who has also established a Civic Minded Students Organization at South Park Middle School, I immediately asked for their suggestions as to whom I should interview next. The use of a snowball sampling technique was thus employed, whereby I would interview one person and then ask for the names of others he or she thought might have useful information. In all, I interviewed the following individuals:

- Two Civic Minded Student Organization founders: Daniel Noyola, Sr. and Daniel Noyola, Jr., both of whom have headed up the Moody Civic Minded Student organizations, as well as founded their own organizations at either West Oso High School or South Park Middle School.
- One Spouse: Alma Noyola, wife of Daniel Noyola, Sr.
- Three former teachers who worked directly with the Civic Minded Students organizations and their sponsors. All three teachers were women: one currently works at Moody High School, one worked at Moody but now works for Flour

Bluff ISD, and finally one worked at Miller High School who also now works in Flour Bluff ISD's University Prep Program.

- Fourteen Students: Ten were taught by Noyola, Sr., one at West Oso High School, and the other nine at Moody High School; four additional students, two from Moody High School post Noyola, Sr., and two from the inaugural graduating class of Collegiate High School.
- One former principal, who encouraged a sister organization to flourish at South Park Middle School under Daniel Noyola, Jr.
- One sociology professor from Texas A&M University, who was invited by and participated with the Civic Minded Students and their programming and conferences at Moody High School and/or Collegiate High School.
- Six siblings: three from the Noyola side of the family and three from the Araiza side of the family. Each of these relatives had intimate knowledge of either campaigns or personal information regarding the ups and downs of the careers and/or lives of each of the founders of the Civic Minded Organizations.
- Three community members who each had their own experiences with the Civic Minded Students: one former Corpus Christi City Manager, one former Corpus Christi Independent School District school board member/Corpus Christi City Council member, and one former *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* reporter.

Interview Length

Some interviews were constrained by the time available for the interviews. Interviewee time must be respected. Therefore, when the opportunity arose for additional questions, those interviews tended to be longer. Some interviewees were not able to be interviewed in person due to medical conditions and/or distance (out of city or state) and were therefore given a skeleton of the interview conducted. These interviews are by far the shortest, as they do not allow for follow-up questioning but provide information by which to verify the activities and programming of the organizations being studied. A few interviews occurred over the phone due to the interviewees time constraints: professional and familial obligations and/or distance (out-of-state: Boston, Massachusetts and Platville, Wisconsin). These interviews varied in time from 20 minutes to slightly over an hour based on the time and availability of the individual. So as not to place an undue burden on individuals, I made the phone call from my cell phone and tried to call land and/or business lines for the interviewee so that they would not be assessed a fee for the interview. Additional interviews were found during the archival research process. These interviews were of the original group of Moody Civic Minded Student organization members in class seminar-style interview form. They were interviewed for a course taken while I attended Rice University. They add in-the-moment insight into the workings of the organizational form.

Interviewer Bias

An interviewer cannot escape her/his own inherent bias. The mere fact that research is being conducted on a specific topic shows bias in that the research area is of importance to the researcher, as other topics could have been studied. In addition, bias is inherent in this endeavor as the researcher (myself) and the topic of interest is closely related to the educational endeavors of my father. Because I see my father as an educational mentor, I want to explore his work, which has been recognized with local, state, and national awards. Specifically, I want to investigate and emulate his work so that I can improve educational opportunities for my students.

To minimize bias as much as possible, however, all interviewees were asked similarly themed questions about their childhood backgrounds, educational and extra curricular experiences, and the role of the organization in accomplishing goals established by the students in their cohort groups. Each interviewee comes from a different perspective (student, teacher, elected and non-elected public official, administrator, sponsor, community member, and reporter), and therefore some follow-up questions were specific to their experiences.

Language (Bilingualism)

For the most part, I tried to conduct all interviews in English. English-only interviews were easier to maintain with the non-Spanish speakers and younger interviewees. However, many of the older Chicanos in the area are bilingual and bicultural, and from time to time they speak in both English and Spanish. One specific

linguistic issue involves their use of code switching, or using different languages while speaking. To assist with this situation, I hired a locally based bilingual transcriber. The interviewee was assured that s/he could express themselves in whatever manner made them feel comfortable. It was therefore the job of the interviewer to make sure a bilingual person was present at the interview. As I am bilingual and a native of the Corpus Christi area, I was able to continue the interview regardless of whether the interviewee spoke in English, Spanish, or a mixed colloquial version of the two languages.

Potential Field Problems

All interviews were conducted at the interviewee's place of residence or at the local area library (La Retama downtown) in a study room. During the interviews, some interruptions occurred: ringing cell phones, air conditioning and/or fan noise, and other interruptions from family or library staff. The interview would generally continue after the interruption was addressed as needed by the interviewer or the interviewee. Phone interviews can also have interruptions. Fortunately, no dropped calls occurred during any of the interviews. It should be noted that interviews conducted via cell phone were documented via real time transcription during the interviews.

At the end of each interview, the interviewer read a summary of what was said to the interviewee for verification. One interviewee from West Oso changed her mind about giving permission to be a part of the research project at the end of the interview, and the interview was therefore not utilized. However, enough material existed in the archival

data, such as newspaper clippings, *Tejano Voices* online interviews, school board meeting notes, and meeting notes from other organizations, so that the withdrawal of the interview did not prevent me from obtaining information needed for the West Oso section of the dissertation.

Data Retrieval

Nueces County Voting Records

Nueces County voting records were accessed via the Nueces County District Clerk website. All voting records utilized in this dissertation (school board, city, county, state, and national elections) were obtained from the archival portion of the website. Depending on the context of the analysis, only certain precincts were pertinent.

Newspaper Articles

The primary newspaper source employed in this dissertation was from the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* (the only major print outlet in the area). Articles were found online via library searches. Other articles utilized were either written or retained by those interviewed during the snowball sampling. During the Internet search process, other article sources were uncovered: the *San Antonio Express News*, the *Victoria Advocate*, and *Texas Monthly*.

Internet Sources

Internet searches for key terms such as West Oso Minded Organization (WOMO), Moody Civic Minded Students, West Oso Civic Minded Seniors, and the names of former and current sponsors of each organization were employed to find information not

obtainable through library archival searches. As our current technological age has created a great deal of new information not readily available via local libraries and/or governmental entities, these searches were useful to find additional data.

Archival Data

Many of the participants who were interviewed provided artifacts of their own to share including photos, brochures, previous work, newspaper articles, meeting notes, momentos, lesson plans, etc., and these added additional insight into the historical analysis. Furthermore, archival data were also obtained from West Oso school board policy, school board agenda meeting minutes, fax transmittals, interviews conducted from previous research by others and/or myself (*Tejano Voices* oral histories and Rice University education class papers).

Outline of Dissertation

As described above, Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study. Chapter 2 reports on Noyola's childhood and early experiences. Chapters 3 and 4 explore Noyola's rise and fall to and from the superintendency of the West Oso School District. The rise of the Moody Civic Minded Students organization is covered in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, observations from local area community members about the Moody Civic Minded Students are explored. Chapter 7 provides an overview of the legacies produced by the Moody Civic Minded Student Organization. Finally, in Chapter 8, an analysis of the organization in the classroom and the community, as well as what it potentially represents for social studies education is presented. An epilogue follows Chapter 8 and provides

additional insight into the impact of Noyola on my life and career. Attachments include relevant research sources, archival photographs of accomplishments, and lesson plan samples for implementation in other classes (either integrally or in modified form).

Chapter 2: Noyola's Childhood and Early Experiences

We all grow up with the weight of history on us. Our ancestors dwell in the attics of our brains as they do in the spiraling chains of knowledge hidden in every cell of our bodies. ~ Shirley Abbott

Our lives are lived through familial experiences and through the bonds of blood or encounters — those we make along the way through abstraction or friendships. With the exception of one semester of college living on the Texas A&I University (now Texas A&M University-Kingsville) campus, Daniel G. Noyola has lived with two families: the one into which he was born, and the one he would create with his future wife, Alma Sonia Araiza. These families have set the stage for the man he has become and the man he will continue to be.

Daniel G. Noyola was born on January 30, 1953, in Corpus Christi, Texas, the third of six children of Marcos Vasquez Noyola, Sr. and Lucila Garcia Noyola. His father was born in Laredo, Texas, in 1926, and later moved to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. At the age of twelve and with six years of schooling in Mexico, he moved back to the United States. His mother Lucila was born in Texas and lived in McAllen and Corpus Christi. Noyola would spend the next twenty-two years of his life on 4433 Valdez, Corpus Christi, Texas, in the heart of a barrio called Molina. Molina's famous ex-residents include slain Tejano star Selena Quintanilla-Perez, Adrian Caldwell (former Houston Rockets power forward), Riley Odoms (former Denver Broncos tight end), Carlos Valdez (prosecutor in the Selena case), Ricardo Sandate (Mexican Baseball League pitcher), and Don Gillis (center for the St. Louis Cardinals football team).

The Molina neighborhood would serve as the educational and emotional backdrop to Noyola's outlook on life. In Molina, two layers of segregation existed. The first was imposed by the Anglo citizens of Corpus Christi. West Oso ISD (WOISD) was originally an Anglo majority district. As the minority population grew, however, Anglo residents moved out of the area. Despite civil rights era desegregation efforts, Corpus Christi neighborhoods and schools remained segregated. According to Willie and Greenblatt (1981), "Most West Side schools still remain virtually minority, a condition that will not necessarily change as the Mexican-American population continues increasing and the Anglo-American population continues decreasing. In addition, economic and housing patterns in minority communities remain virtually unchanged" (p. 152). Thirty years later, the Molina neighborhood and the WOISD is still dominated by poorer minority families.

The second layer of segregation was that of self-segregation by the new minority families. Streets would have a Mexican side and an African-American side that were not separated by railroad tracks, as stereotypically showcased in many Hollywood films, but rather by street divisions, e.g., those of Villarreal and West Point. Streets were not the only point of self-segregation. Almost all minority families in the area picked cotton to make ends meet, and truck pick-ups were usually done by local truck drivers based on race and ethnicity. On occasion, a truck would pick-up both African-American and Mexican-American families for the day's work, but not often. This community, like many others across the U.S., held some of the most segregated hours of the week on Sundays, as blacks in the Molina area attended local Baptist churches and browns

attended local Catholic churches. In this small community, people lived together yet apart. They experienced similar hardships, yet did so separately. And the only point at which they were in one other's presence was through one of America's oldest socializing institutions — the public school.

On the West Side, students from both black and brown families would interact but were still separated by religion, language, and generational status in the U.S. Both African-Americans and Mexican-Americans endured the “Pestosos” (the Spanish word for “Smelly” that rhymes with West Oso) label of the area. The name was derived from the lack of proper drainage and sewage, as well as the close proximity to the city landfill, which left the West Side “smelling.” Students attended separate churches, spoke different languages (Spanish for the Mexican and Mexican-American families; English for the African-Americans families) at home, and were socialized differently based on generational status (newly immigrated and/or U.S. citizen).

Growing Up Molina Style - The Pilgrimage to Corpus Christi

Marcos Vasquez Noyola, the father of Danny Noyola, Sr., began his journey by train to the United States at the age of twelve accompanied by his step brother Manuel Salinas. They arrived in Alice, Texas, and would stay with their aunt Tomacita until the rest of their family could make their way over from Mexico. Felix Salinas was not the biological father of Marcos, but he was the only father he ever really knew. Marcos was two years old when his father was murdered on a bridge near the Nuevo Laredo/Laredo border. No one in the family knows why, and if anyone ever did, they are no longer alive

to tell the story. Marcos' widowed mother would marry Felix Salinas, who had a child (Manuel) from a previous marriage. Welo (meaning "Grandpa", a term given to Daniel Noyola, Sr.'s, grandfather) Felix would have a reputation for having many wives but not from any scandals or divorces — he simply outlived each wife and remarried.

All of Marcos Noyola's siblings would be Salinas's; he was the only Noyola. All were half siblings with the exception of Manuel, who was the eldest and was born from the previous marriage. Although Manuel Salinas held no blood relation, he was the closest to Marcos as their bond began the Noyola-Salinas sibling connection. Marcos became the older brother from whom others in the family sought guidance. All of the Salinas half-siblings were raised with Marcos from birth. He was the logical if not fully biological "hermano mayor" (eldest brother). In addition, Marcos had not only years of experience on his side, he also had the experience of living and growing up in not one but two countries (Mexico and the United States). His upbringing was more than bicultural, it was binational. This background gave him additional insights and wisdom that accorded *respeto* ("respect" in a much stronger form in the Mexican culture than in the American one) (Valdes, 1996).

Danny Noyola, Sr. remembers:

My Dad went to formal schooling in Mexico for just the primary grades. He never went to schools here in the United States, and yet I always remember him as reading the newspaper, reading books, um, so in English and so that kind of later when I grew up a little, I was kinda more inquisitive: How did Dad do that?

Amazingly, when I did have some discussion with him, he [explained that he was] self taught. He taught himself how to read English. And so even though my Dad only went to school to the sixth grade in Mexico, he could read. And I like to say he could read everything from the *Caller-Times* to Shakespeare (Interview, 7/25/2009).

Noyola believes that his own love of reading comes from his father, who set the example for him early on in his life.

Danny Noyola, Sr., recalls the meager wages his father received each week as a driver/deliveryman for a local area pharmacy. He also recounted how he used his persuasive skills to convince his father to buy an encyclopedia set. Within a few years, he had read the entire collection from A to Z, but it all began with a salesman coming by:

We were visited...at our house by [a] gentleman selling World Book Encyclopedias. He comes by, and he makes a presentation to my father. And I'm there and I'm looking at all these World Book Encyclopedias, and he comes up with stories like, do you know that dogs are color blind, and this and that. And he was throwing out a lot of things, and my, uh, my curiosity was peaked. And he was selling those encyclopedias, and so he said it was going to be so much and so much, and he leaves. And dad says, I don't know if I can afford that because, you know, it's gonna be quite a bit. He had forty two dollars and fifty cents a week, and so maybe I had some persuasive skills back then (Interview, 7/25/2009).

Needless to say, it was probably the combination of Noyola's persuasive skills, his father's love of reading, and the notion that education starts in the home that brought those encyclopedia sets to reside at 4433 Valdez. This memory, along with memories of his Welo Felix, are some of the most vivid he has today.

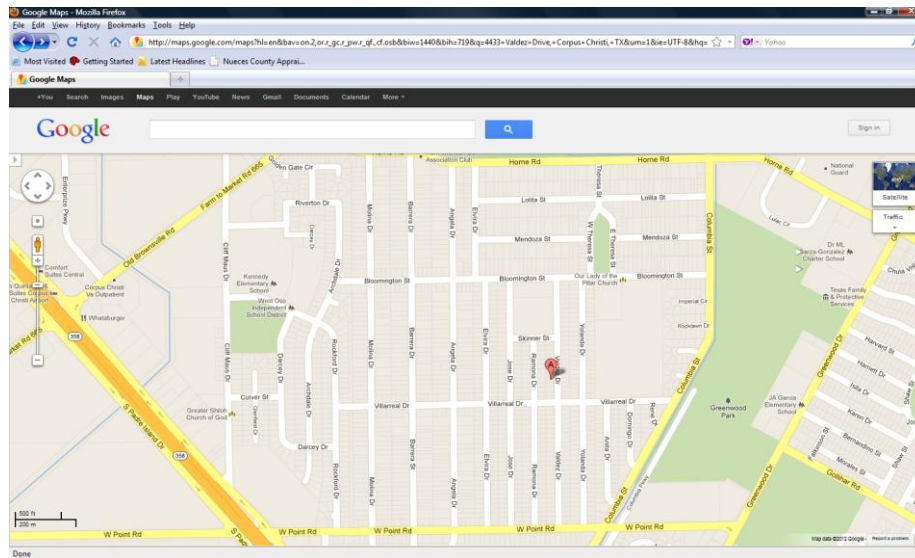


Figure 1. Google Map of Molina Area, 2012

Table 1. Family Tree

| NAME | FAMILY LINKAGE |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Felix Salinas (Welo Felix) | Noyola's Grandfather |
| Marcos Noyola (Salinas' Stepson) | Noyola's Father |
| Lucila Garcia Noyola | Noyola's Mother |
| Daniel Noyola, Sr. | (1 of 6 Noyola children) |
| Alma Noyola (1 of 8 Araiza children) | Noyola's Wife |
| Sonia Noyola | Noyola's Daughter |
| Daniel Noyola, Jr. | Noyola's Son |

Welo Felix

Today, as the rate of divorce has risen sharply, the percentage of blended families is on the rise. According to Wisdom & Green (2002), blended families have at least one caregiver/guardian who is separated, widowed, or divorced from a previous partner...the notion of stepchildren, stepparents, and stepcoupling surrounds blended families. Noyola, was raised with an extended, blended family, not through divorce but via death. The only paternal grandfather he ever knew had no direct blood relation to him, but he was fondly remembered. Noyola remembers being in the cotton fields at age four or five with his older siblings, Marcos and Maria, and their grandfather Welo Felix. Picking cotton was a regular activity in the summer from pre-elementary age to early high school age. Noyola's father Marcos Noyola was employed as a driver/deliveryman for a pharmacy. But, if there were ever a lapse in work, cotton picking was what would help him earn money for the family. Noyola remembers those years as instilling a strong work ethic in him:

So we knew how to work, we were taught how to work. I don't know if we were taught how to work, but we were just out there. And you know it's amazing what the human body can resist and take when you're out there in the hot sun. And when we look at it today, and we step outside, and we live in these air conditioned homes, as soon as you step outside you say, 'Whoa, I think I want to step back in.' So it's amazing that they instilled in us that work ethic. And it was grandfather in the fields, and it was Pop in the pharmacy, Mother in the home. At

one time we were all picking cotton except for my mother because my mother had lupus and she couldn't get out in sun (Interview, 7/25/2009).

The work in the fields was not limited to the family. Friends, neighbors, and everyone with whom Noyola remembers growing up picked cotton at some point. It was just commonplace in the Molina community. He fondly recalls his amazement at not only his Welo Felix's ability to work in the fields but his internal clock:

Working in the fields takes its toll on the body, and as you get older like our grandfather you need to rest as well. Welo Felix would allow us a 15-minute break. He would lie under a tree, look at his watch, and take a nap for exactly 15 minutes. I don't know how he did it. I timed him a couple of times, and he was always on the dot 15 minutes. This was before little alarms on your watch. And if there were little alarms, this was before anyone in the neighborhood could afford such things. He just had an incredible internal clock (Interview, 10/15/2010).

Welo Felix was one of the role models that Noyola feels helped mold him into who he is today:

"You know, when you're young, you're smaller in stature. And so you kind of look up to people. And so, my grandfather, Felix, when I was growing up, he was

already up there in age, but he was strong. I mean, I thought he was a very big man. Later when we grew up, you know, he was average. I guess maybe he might have been, maybe 5' 9", 5' 10" maybe. But, you would look up to him because he was so strong. He could do everything. He could fix things, he could swim. He was a tremendous swimmer. And that was the first time I ever saw someone swim on their back and, and just kinda floating on their back like this and doing the back stroke. And I was like, wow, look at my grandfather go. So he was somebody I thought had so many skills, and there are some things I want to replicate. And he was just an amazing man. Especially physically, he was a very strong man. He was real good with his hands, and then he was a very happy man. He just...he loved to sing, he loved to sing what...what he would call *versos* (verses). And he just...he could give verses out, lyrics out for hours, it seemed like. And so, he was a very interesting man" (Interview, 10/15/2010).

This interesting man produced children in this new blended family. Of all the primos (cousins), Noyola was closest to the ones with whom he had no blood relationship. And the structure of the extended family was close not only in proximity, as they lived in the same neighborhood, but also in terms of the bonds forged through the experience of being raised so closely together. Marcos, as the eldest brother, lived more years with Manuel Salinas, known as "Meme," than the younger siblings, who shared the same mother but a different father from Marcos. Marcos and Meme would live down the street from each other on Valdez Street, and their children would not only pick cotton

together but would spend their free time together as friends. So the now modern concept of blended families had always been a reality for Noyola, who grew up with one even before the concept arose in the national lexicon.

En la Casa – In the Home

As the old African proverb says, it takes a village to raise a child. Molina, although a poor community, was by Mr. Noyola's memory a village. Noyola remembers his father working to support the family and the presence of male role models all around him. These consisted of family (uncles, grandfathers, cousins), coaches, priests, teachers, and scout masters. He recalls the community being so small that there were "no secrets." Because Corpus Christi weather was generally hot and humid, and no one in Molina had modern air conditioning, the windows would stay open in all the homes.

[I]f somebody acted up, you'd hear just about everything. The windows were up, so if anybody was out there using foul language some parent would say, 'Hey Danny, or Hey Jose, or whoever, cut that out.' And they would go and tell the parents. There was no secrecy about it — it was neighbors helping neighbors to try to see that their sons and daughters would behave in a way that was acceptable. (Interview, 10/15/2010)

Divorce was not a common occurrence when Noyola was raised. New women or men were added to the family as wives or husbands only after the death of a previous

spouse. His parents were married until the death of his father, Marcos, in January of 2003. Noyola had a few friends who had divorced parents, but divorce was not the norm, as it is today. In fact, it was much less tolerated due to the “devout Catholicism” of the time in Molina’s Hispanic community.

Religion

The Church played a vital institutional role in Noyola’s family and in the neighborhood. In Molina, the Catholic church serves as the epicenter of religion for Mexican-Americans, as does the Baptist church for African-Americans. It was such a strong piece of the culture that a few of the neighborhood kids, including Noyola, thought about pursuing a career in the priesthood. Unlike the controversy surrounding priests today, in the 1950’s and 1960’s they were seen as role models and often functioned as father figures. To have a child become a priest was highly regarded in the community. Danny would serve as an altar boy and remembers the strong impact that many of the fathers (priests) had on the community.

We had a great priest. We had many great fathers there at the Catholic church, Our Lady of Pilar, there in Molina. And we got involved in like the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), and my favorite was Father Raymond Pena. (Interview, 10/15/2010)

There is still a place in Danny's heart for Father Raymond Pena that is so deep that he has kept up with his career and still remembers the stories the Father told about growing up in Robstown, Texas. Today, Father Pena is now Bishop Pena in a diocese in Brownsville. Noyola fondly remembers more innocent days when priests and parishioners would confess face to face and still keeps with him a bible signed by Bishop Pena. He said, "[T]his church was a very important institution, a very important group to help young people growing up" (Interview, 10/15/2010). It was here Noyola would experience the positive influence that an institution outside of the family could have on the greater community. Some of Noyola's earliest recollections of the Church revolve around attending but not understanding the mass. Most masses at the time were conducted in Latin, and while it is the basis for the romance languages, much of the mass itself was not accessible to the predominately Spanish-speaking attendees. Night masses were offered in Spanish, and this allowed for an interaction with the Church and its teachings. According to Noyola, "Knowing the Church could be flexible was very important; it meant opportunities for change" (Interview, 10/15/2010).

Language

Today, most children in Corpus Christi of Mexican-American descent utilize Tex-Mex words or phraseology in their language but do not necessarily speak or understand the Spanish language. South Texas was home to institutionalized discrimination against language minorities. To suppress the use of the Spanish language, students would be hit with rulers, switches (tree branches), and other objects when Spanish was spoken in the

classroom or within earshot of an Anglo teacher during passing periods and/or the lunch period (Crawford, 1989; DeLeon, 1983; Carter, 1970).

In addition, unless parents protested the school board, and few knew that they had such recourse, many South Texas children with a Spanish surname could not start their schooling on grade level. Instead, they were required to enter an extra year prior to Kindergarten in order to acquire English language skills. If the teacher believed that students did not acquire the skills necessary, they could be kept in these pre-grades for several years, and children could receive harsh reprimands for speaking any language other than English in the classroom (Crawford, 1989; DeLeon, 1983; Carter, 1970).

Alma Sonia Araiza, in Mirando City, Texas, near the Texas border, was one of the few Mexican-American students who did not have to enter this extra year of schooling. Her mother, Andrea DeLaCruz Araiza, fought with local school officials citing her daughter's fluency in both English and Spanish. Araiza was made to feel very uncomfortable in some of those classes, but later she realized that her educational experience was better and more advanced than her Mexican-American friends who lived nearby. Many of her friends' parents did not complain, as the thought of true integration was not even an option. Noyola, recalled that most Mexican-American students spoke both English and Spanish when they entered school. This particular rule was not in effect in Molina by the time he began his schooling.

A singular "rule" typically held for Mexican American children: at home, the language of choice was Spanish; in school, it was English. Reading and writing in Spanish often came from the home. If the parents did not have a mastery of the written

language, then it was not often passed down to the children. Noyola marvels that his father Marcos taught him and his siblings the Spanish language. He said he was inspired to learn to read and write both languages because of the example set by his father. Marcos Noyola only completed the sixth grade in Mexico. Noyola emphasized, “If my father could teach himself English without any formal training or schooling in the language, I certainly could pay attention to my studies and learn English. But [it was a given that I would] never forget our native Spanish” (Interview, 6/15/2010). Although Marcos did not attend secondary schooling, he valued education, and each of his six children would graduate from high school. This achievement was a rare occurrence for a Mexican-American family. Even today, the dropout rate for Latino youth is nearly fifty percent (Ream and Rumberger, 2008; Kelly, 2005). Furthermore, of the six children, one amassed some college hours, a second received a bachelor’s degree, and two would go on to receive master’s degrees.

Subtractive Schooling and Education Along the Way

School subtracts from youth in two major ways. First, it dismisses children’s definition of education, which is not only thoroughly grounded in Mexican culture but also approximates the optimal definition of education as advanced by Noddings (1984) and other caring theorists. According to this definition, the term “educación” assumes that an individual student’s progress is lodged in the caring relationship developed between teacher and student. Valenzuela (1999) writes:

Although educación has implications for pedagogy, it is first a foundational cultural construct that provides instructions on how one should live in the world. With its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and sociality, it provides a benchmark against which all humans are to be judged, whether formally educated or not (p. 21).

Second, subtractive schooling encompasses subtractively assimilationist policies and practices that are designed to divest Mexican students of their culture and language. A key consequence of these subtractive elements of schooling is the erosion of students' social capital, which is evident in the presence and absence of academically oriented networks among immigrant and U.S.-born youth, respectively (Valenzuela, 1999).

The educational experiences of Alma Sonia Araiza and Daniel Garcia Noyola exemplify subtractive schooling. A stark sign of the times was the advice given to each of them upon their high school graduation. Although Araiza graduated third in her class and Noyola was valedictorian of his class, their school counselor recommended that they attend the local community college instead of a university. Araiza was told that she should prepare herself for a secretarial job, and Noyola was told that he should think about joining the military, both classic examples of subtractive schooling. Each of them had mastered the English language and made it to the tops of their respective classes but were steered towards lower-salaried job choices.

Araiza and Noyola were high school sweethearts. Noyola often jokes that he was dating an older woman, as he was a junior and she was a senior when they began their

long relationship. The two are officially only five months apart in age, but Araiza graduated in 1970 and Noyola in 1971. As Noyola is competitive by nature, he wanted to catch up with his future wife. Noyola and Araiza would both graduate from Texas A&I University-Kingsville. Both had double majors, Noyola with political science and kinesiology, and Araiza with political science and Spanish. Their interest in political systems and the enactment of politics built upon their collective desire to benefit their community. This desire would later serve as an inspiration for their future children to pursue higher education and to do it at a diligent pace. They both remember education being such an essentially stressed value in their homes that each would go on to pursue and graduate with masters' degrees and additional certifications in their respective career choices: education (Noyola) and social work (Araiza).

Marriage

On June 12, 1975, Alma Sonia Araiza and Daniel G. Noyola wed in their jeans and overalls at the Nueces County Courthouse with their parents present. Both young adults wanted their money to be spent on acquiring a future home and not on a large wedding or expensive rings. Being a product of the 1970's, Alma tried to use both names Araiza-Noyola in her professional life, but as time moved on it was easier for her to use only the last name Noyola. They began a marriage that has produced two children, Sonia Adriana & Daniel, Jr., and one grandchild, Alejandro Christian, and has lasted for more than thirty-six years and counting.

Daniel and Alma Noyola settled on the South Side of Corpus Christi in a three-bedroom, two-bathroom ranch-style home. The couple had agreed early on to purchase a home that they could afford on one pay check should the other one ever be out of work or lose their job. The house they would settle in was an upgrade from those in which both Alma and Danny Noyola were raised. Both sets of their parents still resided in the Molina neighborhood. The Noyola's current home had central air conditioning, two bathrooms, and a two car garage, whereas their parents' homes had window air conditioning units in one of the rooms, one bathroom and no garage. They lived in a middle-class neighborhood, and their parents' houses were in a working-class neighborhood.

The Noyola's were a part of a new generation where both parents worked outside of the home. This new work dynamic created a generation of grandchildren who spent most of their time with their grandparents while their parents worked. Their grandparents' homes became a cultural daycare as many cousins were also dropped off for the day. Essentially a new generation of children, many of whom did not reside in the Molina area, were raised in Molina via their grandparents' care. Additionally, the Noyola's, although they had a middle-class home, did not act middle class in many ways. Many of their children's clothes were hand-me-downs from older cousins, and when they shopped for food they bought generic brands.

The Noyola's saved money and felt more comfortable in the stability of their employment. When Daniel, Jr., was born, grandmother Araiza came to live with the family. Danny, Jr., did not experience the Molina neighborhood to the same extent his

older cousins or sibling did. He had less contact with his cousins, as Danny, Jr., had one-on-one care with his maternal grandmother. Additionally, he was now the one who provided the hand-me-downs to younger male cousins instead of receiving them himself. Finally, when Danny, Jr., was still a toddler (he is approximately six and one half years younger than his sister), the family moved to a new two-story home that was nearly twice the size of their first home on 4132 Kevin, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

By this time, the Noyola's had changed their spending habits (e.g., living in a larger home, going out to eat more often, donating more money to educational endeavors). What did not change was their push for education and their contributions to community service and social justice. "We may have more things now than we did then, but that means we must be extra thankful and help others even more because we are so blessed" (Noyola, Sr. Interview, 10/15/2010). The Noyola's often cited church principles as their reasons for helping others. Noyola, Sr. also talked about civil rights organizations as an early influence on how to positively impact a community and its needs.

Early Influences on Daniel Noyola, Sr.

"Education is our freedom, and freedom should be everybody's business."
~ Dr. Hector P. Garcia

Activist Influences

Corpus Christi Latino Civil Rights Organizations

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC Council #1) had roots from the South Texas valley but was formerly founded in Corpus Christi, Texas, on

February 17, 1929. LULAC is the oldest functioning Mexican-American civil rights organization in the country. Its founding date marked years of collective action work to create one unified group from previous organizations. During the 1920's, Corpus Christi and much of South Texas was a hot bed of collective action activity. Having proved their loyalty to their country, Mexican-American military men returned after WWI to the same discrimination they had left behind. A former LULACer and military veteran, Dr. Hector P. Garcia, founded the American GI Forum (AGIF) on March 26, 1948, in Corpus Christi, Texas, as a means to combat discrimination against Hispanic veterans.

Although two major Latino civil rights organizations were founded in Corpus Christi, Texas, each organization had a different Latino base to which it appealed to and from which it tried to recruit. LULAC contained more upwardly mobile Mexican-American elite. Members tended to be business owners, entrepreneurs, and/or college educated individuals with professional jobs. This organization was in stark contrast to the AGIF, whose members were predominately working class and military general infantry. Each organization wanted and sought opportunities for Latinos but with various socio-economic focuses from the onset. AGIF along with other post-LULAC organizations "...emphasized the working-class interests of their membership in addition to broader ethnic goals, such as desegregation" (Orback Medina, p. 3, 2011). Dr. Hector P. Garcia had also been a member of LULAC and would be considered part of the Mexican-American elite as he reached the status of medical doctor. Several of his siblings would also go on to become medical professionals. During this era, "[t]he Garcia offspring continued to push the envelope by succeeding in the University of Texas

medical school system, which only accepted one Mexican-American student per year.” (<http://www.justiceformypeople.org/drhector.html>) However, Dr. Garcia had also served his country via military service and thus sought to protect the rights of those veterans who had served their country.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia – AGIF

Dr. Hector P. Garcia was a South Texas civil rights icon whose motto was, “Education is freedom, and freedom should be everybody’s business.” He was a man who served his country during WWII, became a medical doctor when most Mexican-Americans were discouraged or even denied access to secondary education, much less post-secondary education, and helped other Latinos fight blatant institutionalized discrimination by founding the American GI Forum (Kells, 2006; Ramos, 1998; Allsup, 1982). Dr. Garcia believed in the democratic principles upon which the U.S. was founded and made a conscious decision to become an advocate for those who could not advocate for themselves. Dr. Hector, as he is fondly referred to, focused on coalition building as a mechanism for social justice. He inspired many future Latino activists and educators to continue the fight.

Daniel Noyola, Sr. was an educator who, inspired by Dr. Garcia, founded several civic-minded organizations in Corpus Christi for the last thirty years. Dr. Garcia was the essence of everything Noyola, Sr., saw as triumphant in the American system. He was a walking “American Dream” story. Dr. Garcia, like Marcos Noyola (Noyola’s father), stressed education, a strong work ethic, and maintenance of his cultural identity through the use of the Spanish language. However, Dr. Garcia not only earned a doctoral degree

when many Mexican-Americans barely progressed to middle school, but he also formed an organization that advocated for those without a voice. Through the American GI Forum, Noyola recognized the need for civic engagement among some of the poorer communities in this South Texas town, which Dr. Garcia had made a point of organizing during the pinnacle of his civil rights mobilization successes.

The concept for the civic action organizations occurred to Noyola in the late 1970's when he was teaching high school civics courses. He used seminar-style class discussions about community improvement as a powerful teaching strategy, one which eventually led him and his students to collective action. The first formalized organization was geared toward neighborhood empowerment: the West Oso Minded Organization. Later the initiatives undertaken by WOMO made their way into the West Oso school system. Eventually, one of the school organizations began to flourish more so than the others — the Moody Civic Minded Students. This high school organization would later found a one-hour weekly television program (La Hora Civica – The Civic-Minded Hour) and a neighborhood organization (the Moody Neighborhood Association and the Corpus Christi Barrios Association, respectively) that are still operational and active today.

The longest running of the student organizations is the Moody Civic Minded Students organization, which has been active since the 2000-01 school year. This organization has had an immense amount of success with regard to community service and civic engagement: voter registration drives, E-Slate trainings, petitions, presentations to city and county officials, and the securing of over 18 million dollars in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds for local infrastructure improvements, to

name a few of its successes. The Moody Civic Minded Students epitomize what the school district now refers to as a need for community activities to foster the hearts and minds of students (CCISD Superintendent's Leadership Conference, 2009).

In 1990, Congress passed the National and Community Service Act. This legislation encouraged schools to incorporate service-learning programs into their curriculum with grant monies as incentives. Service-learning projects were designed to assist students with practical applications of skills that would support class curriculum and enhance their civic participation. Although much of the service-learning research (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Chapin, 1998; Blythe & Berkas, 1997; Serow, 1997) notes that these types of experiences can lead to future civically engaged citizens, in-depth studies of long-term civic projects are lacking.

Recent research has been conducted on the potential for increased civic participation when students are involved in extracurricular activities and enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) coursework (Duffy, 2008; Ernst, 2005; Van Horn, 2001; Smith 1999). However, those studies fail to recognize that adding more AP courses or exposing students to extracurricular activities is not always a viable option for cash-strapped districts and low-income students who work at paying jobs before and after school.

The Moody Civic Minded Students organization overcame, in many respects, the barriers mentioned above, because much of the club activities were/are done within the confines of the regular social studies classroom. All students enrolled in high school civics at Moody High School — whether AP, Dual Credit, or general education courses

— are automatically members of the organization. As part of their regular class work, students engage in a variety of activities that promote civic activism and community service. How this organization was started, evolved, and impacted the community is discussed in the following chapters. Prior to continuing this narrative, however, I include a brief history of the Mexican-American Civil Rights movement/Chicano movement and its impact on Daniel Noyola, Sr.

Chicano Movement

The 1970's were a time of Chicano empowerment across the state of Texas. Younger Mexican-American activists were calling for a renewed push for equality and access to public and private institutions. One mobilizing entity, La Raza Unida Party, was organizing in the small town of Crystal City, Texas. In fact, Jose Angel Gutierrez, one of the co-founders of the newly formed party, attended and graduated from Texas A&I University in 1966, while my father was a junior high school student in the Molina area. Growing up in close proximity to the university and being an avid reader allowed Noyola exposure to the Chicano movement's burgeoning claiming of power across the state of Texas.

Noyola was particularly impressed with the effectiveness of organizations such as Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio, which was founded by Ernie Cortez. The ability to take an organization that was positive for so many back in the neighborhood and use it as a catalyst for change inspired Noyola. Cortez realized that to maintain an effective organization, it must be tied to an institutional base that would

remain regardless of whether the same leader was present. For Cortez, the answer to this issue lay within the religious institution of the Catholic Church.

To form COPS, Cortez was able to utilize the infrastructure in place from his IAF background and the activism of organizations such as PADRES on the West Side of San Antonio (Martinez, 2005). After years of planning and organizing, COPS confronted then Mayor Charles Becker at a 1974 City Council meeting. In a recounting of the events, some 500 members of COPS attended the City Council meeting with Father Albert Benavides and Beatrice Gallego in which they were, “much better informed, and more knowledgeable about San Antonio socio-economic and political issues than were the Mayor, Councilmen, and City Manager,” as they had “been quietly organizing, and painstakingly researching the issues for a whole year before they decided to approach city officials” (*San Antonio Express News*, 6/6/04).

La Raza Unida Party

La Raza Unida Party was formed at the onset of the 1970’s in Crystal City, better known as “Cristal” by Mexican and Mexican-Americans familiar with the city. The focus of the party was to reinvigorate the call for civil rights and was motivated by Mexican and Mexican-American youth who were disillusioned with what they thought were the “tio tacos” of their day (Mexican slang for “uncle Tom” or “Sell Out”). Many in the party felt that Latino civil rights organizations such as LULAC and AGIF had lost their way and were too assimilationist in their views.

One of the party’s most outspoken leaders and co-founder, Jose Angel Gutierrez, now an attorney and professor of political science at UT-Arlington. He felt the same way

that many veterans of the Vietnam era did: trust no one over the age of 30. The formation of this party was to improve the economic, social, and political needs of the Chicano (young, politically conscious, socially active Mexican-Americans). The party did have early success in winning Chicano representation at the ballot box in Cristal and in the election of the first two Mexican-American Mayors of LaSalle County.

Noyola found the passion and successes of the activism of La Raza Unida to be inspiring, but he did not appreciate what he saw as the bashing of leaders over 30 years of age, such as Dr. Hector P. Garcia. Although he was closer in age to those in La Raza Unida, Noyola was raised in Corpus Christi, where he had personal interaction with local area activists. For Noyola, Dr. Hector was not a “tio taco,” as he was described by Jose Angel, because he had personally witnessed Dr. Garcia providing free services to the community. He felt no one was more dedicated to the cause of Mexican-American civil rights than Dr. Garcia. With so many role models (individually and institutionally), Noyola knew that he wanted to make a difference just like his heroes had done: Ernie Cortez (using the Church as a foundation for activism) and Dr. Hector P. Garcia (working tirelessly in the Molina community). The only question was how?

Chapter 3: Noyola's Rise in WOISD

The Legacy of Teaching

Noyola always knew that he wanted to return to his neighborhood. He envisioned changing the lives of the entire community by providing them with opportunities like his role models, Dr. Hector P. Garcia and Ernie Cortez, had done. At first, he thought this would be done through litigation work, and so he originally wanted to become an attorney. As he progressed in his schooling, he developed a love for political science, sociology, and journalism. He would later abandon the notion of becoming an attorney. Upon his graduation from Texas A&I University-Kingsville, he was approached by Rocky Garcia, a former coach/athletic director/principal of WOISD, who asked him to apply for a teacher/coach position at West Oso Junior High School. For Noyola, this meant attacking the educational system from the inside. He would become a teacher in his alma mater district of West Oso ISD (10/15/2010).

In the high school government courses he taught, Noyola found his stride as a teacher. Having borne witness to the Chicano movement and having been raised in an area of Corpus Christi where he saw one of the most impactful, if not the most impactful, Mexican-American civil rights activists work to improve educational and medical conditions, Noyola may have been primed for what has been called “the great man theory.” The best-known proponent of this theory was historian Thomas Carlyle, who once stated, “The history of the world is but the biography of great men” (1888). Noyola,

having been raised with so many strong male role models, within his family and his community, believed strongly in the will of great men to make significant changes.

It is important to note that Carlyle was not without his detractors. Herbert Spencer contended that the great man method of analyzing history was not only unscientific, but it also ignored the socializing impacts of society on people (Spencer, 1896). Most social scientists no longer ascribe to this theory of a specific leader being the major catalyst for movements or organizations. However, Dr. Carl Allsup, professor of ethnic studies at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and author of *The American GI Forum*, recently stated that although “[I]t is considered debunked by many, there are some merits to the notion of a person with charisma and passion from a certain time and place being able to activate people in a way others could not” (Phone Interview, June 17, 2010). Danny Noyola, Sr., is a man with strong convictions and passion for his community.

Returning to his community to teach gave Noyola an additional passion for his teaching, as he recognized a direct, almost visceral connection to the injustice he was seeing and also to what his students, many of whose families he had grown up with as a child, were experiencing (10/15/2010). It was as a high school government teacher that he would coin the phrase “civic minded students.” The original students who formalized the nomenclature that he, his children, and others would later use were from the class of 1983. Noyola employed seminar-style discussions in his government and advanced social studies topics courses. In that senior government class, students would bring up problems in their schools and community. These seminar-style discussions became the

impetus for civic action based on course curriculum, such as the teaching of federalism, local politics, etc. and creating ties with everyday civic-minded activities.

Over the years, the term stuck and in the spring of 1983, Noyola's senior class awarded him with a plaque that read, "In appreciation to Coach Danny Noyola for your sincere dedication and tremendous inspiration inside and outside the classroom from your Civic Minded Seniors" (artifact, 1983). The words Civic Minded Seniors along with the name of the high school, West Oso, would become the official name of the first formalized civic-minded student organization in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1996: the West Oso Civic Minded Seniors.

One of the most active seniors from the 1983 class, Joel Barrera, is the co-founder and executive director of Common Wealth Seminar, which is a program specifically designed to target and teach the immigrant and minority populations of Massachusetts how the legislature works. Over the last six years, Common Wealth Seminar has turned out nearly 100 graduates per year for a total of approximately 600 graduates since the inception of the program. In keeping with the notion of access for all, the program does not charge a fee to participate. Those who are able may choose to donate \$60 to the organization. Common Wealth Seminar is able to offer these free lessons as they are sustained by a number of past and present donors: The Boston Foundation, the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation, Access Strategies Fund, Ansara Family Foundation, the Cabot Charitable Trust, the Foley Hoag Foundation, and Third Sector New England. Barrera saw the potential power of young advocacy in our legislative system and created a summer program for young leaders. The program is for people under 30 years of age.

Most of the participants are college aged and a few are high-level high school students in the program. According to Barrera, “Young people are a good audience because they are future forward-oriented.”

Barrera also remembers the inspiration that Noyola had been to him:

It was Danny. He was focused on getting us engaged. He actually got me involved in a rally on speaking against the cutting of a library budget. He was just a great inspiration in terms of paying attention to politics, government, and your physical space, and he was a role model for us at the time and a coach. I mostly remember guys being involved probably because of the sports aspect of him being a coach. He made you pay attention to the world. He engaged with you on a person level. I would count him as [one of] only two or three mentors from the high school along with Virginia Elder (English teacher) and Rita Lockhart (Honors English teacher) (Phone interview, 6/16/2010).

Recalling Noyola’s teaching, Barrera said the following:

In order to have that type of a class, the teacher needed a certain knowledge base, certain charisma. They have to be able to show they care. Danny was a special teacher. It probably helped that he was from the area. I would count him as a significant influence as far as that depth of social conscious thinking. I don’t think I would have gotten that at home. It made me more open to those issues in

college. I don't think it only benefited the advanced students, as many would not have received this information at home. He also cared about Mexican-American politics, which opened my eyes to a bunch of stuff. (Interview, 10/15/2010)

It is clear from Barrera's statements that Noyola was an influence on his classes. His influence is also supported by his high school teaching awards, as well as the plaques and accolades given to him by students. It is important to note that he was also inspired by his students. The classroom became a forum where ideas were discussed. Brainstorming flowed from teacher to students and from students to teacher: they impacted one another. The very words he used in class, which later were formalized by his students, served to spearhead a neighborhood organization that Noyola would call the West Oso Minded Organization (WOMO). He took the work being done in his classrooms and moved it into the community in which he was born and raised and had returned to work.

Community Activism/Politics

WOMO

On May 15, 1985, at 7:15 PM, the first meeting for the West Oso Minded Organization was called to order with the specific purpose of:

[helping] the educational process and educational opportunities of the children in the West Oso Independent School District through the use of volunteers who will

initiate, implement, supervise, and manage various programs and projects to achieve this objective. This organization will be a non-profit organization, and will attempt to receive such recognition from the proper authorities (Minutes of WOMO meeting, 1985).

Thus, the West Oso Minded Organization was founded by Daniel Noyola, Sr., who was elected president of the organization on that evening in 1985. He was inspired by his students' seminar- style civics class discussions and their initiative to undertake and complete community projects: the honoring of a dying teacher with a scholarship fund; the honoring of overlooked community members, such as janitorial staff, with civic-minded awards and a banquet; the funding of a marquee for the high school (with Coca Cola sponsorship); the funding of paper towels, soap, and mirrors in the boys restrooms at the high school; the funding of a four-way stop on Molina and Villarreal streets for safety purposes; the funding of ADA ramps for the West Oso High School library and other areas in the school building; and the creation of a newsletter to inform students of the happenings around the campus and community. These are just a few of the projects that came to fruition from this civics class.

WOMO had Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient and locally adored civil rights leader, as a guest speaker for its 1st Annual Declaration Against Illiteracy March and Rally. In a public forum piece in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Noyola stated that "Dr. Garcia reminded the audience that this area, at one time, had the

nation's highest infant mortality rates caused by diarrhea and dehydration. Molina, you have come a long way." Noyola fondly remembers that first rally:

We had all these signs such as 'reading is important' and 'I'm a WOMO backer.'

We had two guest speakers that I had invited. Dr. Green, a sociology professor from Kingsville, and the legendary Dr. Hector P. Garcia. He had just received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Ronald Reagan. The highest recognition, distinction a civilian can get in this country, and he's speaking at our first Declaration Against Illiteracy March and Rally. Is that powerful? You better believe it (Interview, 7/25/2009).

Noyola spoke often to his children, Sonia and Danny, Jr., of many organizations and leaders during their childhood, but he talked most about Dr. Hector. The entire Noyola family had the privilege not only of hearing about him, but also of meeting him and being in his presence on many occasions. Noyola, Sr., always reminded his children of how he was inspired by the good doctor and of how he wanted to inspire his students like the doctor inspired the community. With that inspiration, it would become reality: a culmination of events led to the founding of WOMO. The atmosphere at home, which always called for pursuing additional education, the civil rights movements Noyola learned about and lived through, the seminar-style discussions and projects his students created, and Noyola's deep desire to make a change in the community he loved no doubt influenced his decision to found WOMO.

Being the daughter of the founder, I was always at each meeting and believed that I knew the mission and scope of the organization better than any other child in attendance. When media outlets would seek interviews, I was often selected as the child spokesperson for the organization. For example, on a segment entitled “Illiteracy the Untapped Mind” on KIII-TV, I was the young child at the opening of each segment who acted as if she were trying to read but stopped out of frustration at not being able to continue. I remember having to do a couple of takes at the Molina Neighborhood Center entrance. Additionally, when I was about nine years old, a news story reported:

Sonia Noyola sat at a table piled high with mystery books for young readers. ‘It’s a story about a reporter whose editor sends her to Mexico to do a story about the Mayans, and the adventures she has while she’s there,’ the fourth-grader said, giving a summary of the book she was reading (*Victoria Advocate*, Aug. 6, 1986).

This article is an example of how an organization founded by my father and others from Molina was getting statewide press coverage. WOMO started in the humble but proud neighborhood of Molina and was centered around the West Oso area, an often overlooked Independent School District. I recall those we knew on the Southside, in the area in which we resided, asking where the West Oso ISD was located. Many were often shocked to know it was located within the city limits. As a child I always found that odd. Living in a city your entire life and never knowing this entire school district or

community existed was just unfathomable to me, as our parents had immersed us on the West Side with our grandparents and extended family members.

The major focus of the organization was to empower the local community through the civic participation of families and local area organizations. WOMO sought to tackle needed issues within Molina. Another part of the organization's mission was merely to bring attention to an area the city ignored. These goals were attacked through the educational and recreational activities. In addition, Noyola made sure to invite political leaders and those aspiring to political leadership to many of the functions as he felt, "If those in charge know the issues of your community and see it first hand, they are more likely to help your community in the future" (Interview, 6/20/2009).

In its brief history, WOMO had a multitude of accomplishments. Within its first two years, those in the organization had tackled many of its goals. The Book Exchange Project, Summer Reading for Fun, and After School Study Halls initiatives were developed to foster learning and increase academic grades and test scores for struggling area students. As a way to incentivize hard work among students, programs such as the Memorial Scholarships Fund, the Swimming Party for After School Study Hall Participants, the End of School Party, the Summer Reading for Fun picnic, and Parents' Night Out were established. Noyola realized that to keep up the various programs and expand to other programs, he needed the community at large to buy into the concept. So WOMO made sure to "get the word out" through participation in the KUNO 16th de Septiembre Parade and two Declaration Against Illiteracy marches and rallies. Noyola also implemented a systematic way to keep community members and local area political

figures in contact with one other: Appreciation Banquets; city, county, and state elected officials presentations; the All Ex-West Oso Students' Career Fair; and meetings with Community/Church leaders for Operation Education. Finally, permanent fundraisers were established to help offset the costs of the initiatives, such as an annual Bar-B-Q and raffle fundraisers for scholarships.

WOMO, a neighborhood organization initially inspired by high school students, would make its way from being a community supporter of schools to being an organization that students could join within the schools. The West Oso Junior High School welcomed WOMO Jr. Club programs, featuring Club Multiplication Facts Flash Cards, After School Study Halls, the Recreation Program for Study Hall Participants, and the Dance for Multiplication Facts Flash Cards Participants. Noyola believes the key to WOMO Jr.'s success was listening to those in the classrooms, as he stated,:

We listened to what the teachers wanted assistance with. A major problem was getting students interested in math and finding a way to get them to do practice study. In WOMO Jr. our students were a part of an organization, and they were not just doing work for class but for their organization — an organization that wanted to help educate its citizens (Interview, 6/20/2009).

Coach Rocky Garcia/Driving for the Masters 1985

Although Noyola was blessed with a plethora of individual and institutional role models, his professional mentor was Coach Rocky Garcia. Coach Rocky, as he was called, instructed Noyola, who was praised for his prowess on and off the field during his high school years. He had a drive that pushed him in every endeavor in which he participated, and excellence seemed to follow his work ethic. Noyola was not unnoticed by Coach Rocky, as he would go on to graduate as Valedictorian of West Oso class of 1971, and would receive scholarship offers for both his baseball and basketball sportsmanship. Noyola remembers: “Coach Rocky told me if I ever wanted a job to just come ask him after I graduated (June 17, 2010). Those words never left him.

By the time he was named principal of West Oso High School, Rocky Garcia sought to obtain higher education. The story he told Noyola was that he wanted companionship on the drive to Texas A&I University Kingsville. Coach Rocky encouraged Noyola to drive with him and pursue his own Masters in School Administration. As Noyola explained:

At that point in my career, I really had no desire or intention to become an administrator. I was really happy and productive being a teacher and a coach. Coach Rocky persuaded me to drive with him from Corpus Christi to Kingsville where he was finishing up his degree in school administration. I don't want to say he tricked me, but he knew I didn't want to pursue it. So, he made it seemed as if I was helping him. Coach Rocky said if I was going to be helping him drive up

there, why didn't I just sign up for some courses. I really did not want to but eventually I did, and it turned out to be a very pivotal educational milestone for me. It enabled me to get my first administrative job, which was as Coach Rocky's assistant principal (Interview, 6/17/2010).

Noyola's entry into the administrative side of West Oso would last for well over a decade. He would serve at the junior high and high school levels and ultimately at the top post of the district as superintendent. Each of these steps might not have been possible without the encouragement of Rocky Garcia. The best way to summarize the years before his ascendancy to central office is through a reflection piece I found in my research.

Administration Years: A Daughter's Flashback Perspective

To sum up Noyola's administrative experience, I utilize an archived education reflection paper that I wrote for the ED 530 course. Our goal in this course was to understand the modern American high school from our perspective as high school seniors. While the paper is written from my point of view, it offers a sense of what Noyola's administrative style encompassed and the challenges he faced as the principal of West Oso High School. Thus it is quoted in its entirety below:

I am awakened no later than 5 AM each morning to the sounds of "Sonia wake up," to which I reply "O.K." I will stay asleep for another 15 minutes, however,

as my father gets ready for the day. By the time I hit the driveway, it is about 5:40 AM, and we are off to a neighborhood taco stand/gas station near the high school. With tacos in hand, my father and I unlock the front doors to the school while picking up any trash on the way to the entrance because he believes in taking pride in all aspects of school: from academics to aesthetics. As you may or may not have guessed, my father is also the principal of the high school I attend. Did I mention he also graduated from this high school back in the early seventies as valedictorian?

This West Side, 98% minority, 3A high school in the heart of Molina has a long history of being the alma mater of many members of my family (parents, aunts, uncles and cousins). Molina is a mostly infamous neighborhood in the Corpus Christi area that has produced some famous people: Selena (slain Tejano singer); Riley Odems (former NFL football player); Adrian Caldwell (former NBA basketball player), to name a few. Although I reside in the city of Corpus Christi, I attend WOISD (a small and poor independent school district). West Oso is known for its high crime, teenage pregnancy rates, dropout rates, and high percentages of STD's among its younger population. On a positive note, the district is also known for its stellar basketball program. But other than that, its reputation is basically in the doghouse. What West Oso lacks in reputation, it makes up for in the tenacious spirit of its hardworking residents. The people of this community are not only the backbone of the city but also the nation. Our neighborhood has disproportionately lost more men in war than any other section

of the city. In their honor, a plaque was placed in the high school, a monument was erected in a local park, and the park's name was changed to the Molina Veteran's Park. My father helped with that initiative as he is from the neighborhood.

Now back to the onset of the day. People will not start arriving for at least another hour and a half, so I sit in what is the coolest aspect of our high school, the sunken cafeteria, and look over my work for the day. In front of me is the school's library, but no one ever goes in there. If you have to look up anything for your English paper or any other paper, you have to go to the Greenwood library, one of the poorest and most limited libraries in the city (many take the bus to get there). Our high school library not only has outdated books that have not been checked out in decades, it also has many books below 9th grade reading level. When it comes time to purchase new books, the library is very low priority. The monies allocated for book purchase by the district, which is poor, has a high property tax rate, and no major businesses to help offset the cost of public education, go towards purchasing whatever textbooks are needed in the classrooms (and even then we sometimes have to share books).

Teachers in my school are a drastic mix of those who have been there forever and those who are fresh from school or starting a new career. The ones starting a new career usually do not last the year, as they are given the classes with students who have the greatest discipline problems. Every year new math teachers are recruited for the freshman and sophomore classes, and almost every

year the teachers wind up becoming frustrated or crying in front of the classes during the first month. After they leave, a substitute is usually called in and may be there for a month or the entire year depending on the ability to recruit new teachers. Those teachers who are fresh from school usually only stay a year or two so that they may gain valuable work experience before moving on to Corpus Christi, Flour Bluff, or Tulo-so-Midway school districts. This leaves us with the teachers who have been there forever. In the entire school, only three of the veteran teachers are known for their amazing teaching abilities and/or dedication to the students: the art teacher, Mr. Valdez (who is from the neighborhood and creates all of the logos and paintings for the school free of charge); the Senior English teacher, Ms. Lockhart (who teaches the honors class sections); and the Algebra teacher, Ms. Zuniga (who comes in early and stays late for anyone).

Our school is enclosed in one main building with a few portables out back. The automotive courses are offered in a garage-type facility on the side of the school. If the air conditioning system fails during the late spring, we are all sent home, as Corpus weather (90 to 100 degrees and 95 to 99% humidity) does not allow for extended stays in buildings without windows. The bathrooms at the high school take some getting used to, as some of the stalls lack doors and the rest were covered with massive graffiti. I say they were covered with massive graffiti, but they now only have minor writings, as my father started a new OCR (on-campus-restriction) process whereby students who were caught in the act of “tagging” would not miss courses but instead would come in on weekends to

paint those areas of the school filled with graffiti (parental consent had to be obtained). My dad has a nickname in the school: McGruff (the crime dog on those TV commercials). I thought it was rather funny, and he wears it as a badge of honor anyway.

As I described, the sunken cafeteria is the coolest place in the school because it is where we have all of our major functions: dances, dinners, many after school programs, and awards receptions. Our prom is held at one of the local hotels, if and only if the junior class (which should start its fundraising efforts its freshman year) has enough money to sponsor the junior/senior prom. Depending on the year, those who raise the money for prom are either the brains of the school or the most popular — it tends to go back and forth each year.

The cliques in school are very standard: the band nerds, the brains, the athletes, the gang bangers, the cool kids, the kickers, the drama crowd, the druggies, and so on and so forth. And like most schools, these groups have some kids who fit in to more than one clique. Although I am in many extracurricular activities (and in most of those you run into the same people since our school is so small), I officially only hang with my boyfriend and our close friend Stan. I guess this would be my technical clique; however, I have friends in each of the above groups. I have to say that when I transferred here, many of my friends back at Carroll High School (South Side school, currently considered one of the more elite schools) were worried about the gangs and the “thuggish” people I would encounter. I actually saw more gang fights during my first year at Carroll than I

ever did during my three years at West Oso. Unlike Carroll, however, I either knew directly or indirectly everyone from West Oso who was involved in any “thuggish” activity that was reported at school or on the news. The funny thing is, the few incidents that occurred at West Oso always came out on the news, while all the incidents that I saw at Carroll never did.

As far as classes go, we have three programs: advanced honors, honors, and regular. If you graduate with advanced honors it means you took at least five of the seven honors courses (English I-IV, Biology II, Physics II, Calculus) offered. The honors diploma means that you took at least three honors courses. The regular one, of course, is what most people get at our school, and it means you take the bare bones courses. If you were a student who had a difficult time in English and could not maintain high enough grades to place you in the honors course for the next school year, you were not going to make the advanced honors diploma. Also, our class was the first one to have the option for dual credit English (where you could get college credit), and over half of the Senior English Honors class was interested. However, it felt as if our English teacher discouraged our class from taking dual credit and discussed how difficult it would be. Ultimately, I was the only one who signed up for the course. I, too, felt pressured not to take the course because of what our English teacher had told us, but mom and dad were very supportive. Dad said if I took the class and showed others it was possible, it would open the door for more people to take it, and we could expand our dual credit offerings. I am glad I did it. By the end of the year,

I had six hours of college credit in English. Signing up for the dual credit program at Del Mar College is another story in which a tragic outcome could have emerged, but ask me about that later. My mom and dad said it's always hardest on those who go first, but in the end we help others by blazing a trail.

Right now, our district is trying to keep its accreditation. We are on a probationary period. In order to do my part for the school, I use one of my extra courses to tutor students who have failed the math portion of the TAAS test. This situation makes me think about a question someone asked last week: "Who is best served by the school, and who is least served?" I think the plain answer is that the city is best served and the community is least served. What I mean by this is that our city, by not providing all of the students in Corpus with an equally applicable education, is ensuring that the majority of students in my high school will serve only as the menial minimum wage/service labor that our "touristy" city needs (we are second only to San Antonio as a tourist destination in Texas). Those students who attend the better schools in CCISD will serve as our future executives and higher-ups in city and county government. If they choose to leave, they have great opportunities ahead of them. The community, on the other hand, is bombarded by negative media coverage, an undeserved reputation, and a sense of hopelessness for many who reside within it.

On a happier note, my father has made some major changes in the curriculum concept of the school. He is promoting a style of TLC: Thinking, Leadership, and Cooperative High School and Community. To promote teacher

morale, he is having each teacher sponsor an activity that they enjoy every other Friday. Students can then sign up for these courses (Film Studies, Chess, Fishing, etc.) as fun activities. From what I can gather from my friends, who aren't always treated with the greatest respect by some of these teachers, is that it has helped bridge the gap between teachers and students. Now, a teacher (most of whom are 40+ years old and Anglo) can relate to a student (all but a handful of which are minority and poor) on another level. However, touchy-feely programs alone won't cure everything. Our school has been the political focal point for the community, as it has been the location where the Nueces County Democratic Convention is held annually. But now it is also being opened for the community on a daily basis. My father has also opened up the high school after hours and on weekends for English as a Second Language courses (mostly for community parents), basketball tournaments, math preparation, and tutoring in various courses. A set of courses on computers is on the list for the future when we get more than two computers (in the typing teacher's class).

My dad often says: "You can't stay in your ivory tower. You have to come down and help." While dad wanted me to attend college, he was always warning me about not forgetting to help others just because 'I got mine.' He wants to serve as an example and not just as a new principal filled with hot air, so he is thinking of co-teaching the government courses next year. Dad has so many ideas of what he wants to do. Honestly, I don't know if I am glad that I am graduating before he teaches, or if I am sad. I mean, the things the he wants to do,

I would be so happy to have them as part of my class experience. On the other hand, the way our government teacher just gave us worksheets that took 15 minutes to do really let me use that class as a study hall for my dual credit English class. I was doing double the English work of any senior on campus and any senior prior to me at West Oso. Not to mention, I was spending my actual study hall time tutoring others to pass their exams. If I ever complained about this, my father always had a comeback.

“The best students are also teachers” is his motto. He believes that students should be empowered to be great teachers. This concept involves taking the students who have a mastery of a certain subject and having them assist their fellow peers during study hall, extra course periods, or after school (as students can better relate to other students). This does not mean that teacher’s will be taken out of the loop; instead, the teacher’s will be given more autonomy in the class, as my father says he’s not into “micromanaging.” He has recently been in negotiation with the local area colleges, and it looks as if he is securing funding for each of the students in the top ten to be guaranteed a free four-year ride to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (this would be in addition to money he has secured for students with a B or better average to receive a scholarship to assist them with the cost of attending Del Mar College). I will not be benefiting from the four-year ride program, as I am already graduating. And hey, I will be the only student in my class attending the University of Texas-Austin. Our valedictorian was awarded a full ride to Columbia University but is rejecting it

because he is marrying his high school sweetheart, who is the nicest person I have ever met. Unfortunately, she was recently kicked out of her church, which is another story.

The scores are in and we have made great improvements in our test scores. I have to brag that each of the students I tutored have all passed the math section of the TAAS, but some need to retake the reading portion. I have to give credit where credit is due, however, and I believe that the true leadership came from my father, who is only in his second year as principal of the high school. He has helped turn the tide on our district's accreditation woes. Right now, it seems as if the students, teachers, and community members have at least a bit of hope that we can turn our district into a stellar one, even though people are still upset about the basketball scandal. But that, too, is another story.

My education reflection paper, although student-centric in many aspects, sheds light on what my father was trying to change and what his programs were doing from the perspective of a student, also his daughter, who saw not only the administrative aspect of change but also the changes in the classrooms. I never fully grasped what a historical vantage point I had in my youth. I also never realized that in living the model that he and my mother had constructed, I was in fact blazing trails in my own right. I only saw the immediate future, but my parents saw what could be if I took advantage of the English course opportunity. The dual credit English courses, along with others, would expand. And today my former English teacher, who is now a professional peer, has told others,

“Sonia was my first dual credit student. She helped start the whole thing.” Starting the whole thing is a sentiment to which I deeply relate. My father started the Civic Minded Students program at West Oso, and now both my brother and I have founded our own Civic Minded organizations.

West Oso Civic Minded Seniors



Figure 2. Noyola, Sr., and West Oso Civic Minded Seniors, 1996

The West Oso Civic Minded Seniors organization was founded by Principal Daniel Noyola, Sr., in 1996. He decided that he wanted not only to serve as an administrator but also to carry forth his passion for civics by co-teaching and sponsoring a high school civic organization reminiscent of the days in which he held the seminar-

style discussion sections with his students in the 1970s and 1980's. All senior students enrolled in the civics course were automatic members. Noyola retained the high school's name and added the words "civic" from his course title and "minded" from WOMO, the organization inspired by his high school students. The first West Oso Civic Minded organization was born in the fall of 1996. This organization lasted only two years but was the foundation of future civic organizations throughout the city of Corpus Christi. The *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* article below published on Sept. 23, 1996, showcases the group's initial work in the community.



Figure 3. Civic-Minded Seniors Newspaper Article, 1996

In its brief tenure, the West Oso Civic Minded Seniors organization was showcased in many local newspaper articles. It was recognized for its block-walking voter registration drives, Get-Out-the-Vote bus drives, and community convention, which was open to the public and was the place in which proposals, projects, resolutions, candidate forums, and educational booths were provided to the community. Noyola recounts, "We used the government class to teach about the Constitution and to get students talking about what needed to be fixed in their community (Interview, 6/17/2010). Civic participation among youth was being seen in mobilization efforts and

in elections themselves. The article above references a community convention to be hosted by the West Oso Civic Minded Seniors. The following is the first page of their agenda for the event:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WEST OSO COMMUNITY CONVENTION | | |
| November 3, 1996 | | |
| 1:00 p.m. | | |
| Program | | |
| 12:00-2:00 | REGISTRATION | |
| 1:00-2:00 | EXHIBITS AND ENTERTAINMENT | |
| | *INFORMATION BOOTHS | *ENTERTAINMENT |
| | .EDUCATIONAL | .LAS MARIAS |
| | .SOCIAL SERVICES | .MELONEE JOHNSON |
| | .BUSINESSES | .ADRIANA MORA |
| | .GOVERNMENTAL, ETC. | .KENDRICK JONES |
| | | .VANESSA VILLARREAL |
| | | .AWARD WINNING BEAR BAND |
| CONVENTION CHAIRPERSONS: | | |
| 2:00 | CONVENTION GAVELED TO ORDER | BESSIE BALLIN/MELONEE JOHNSON/REYES TORRES |
| | INVOCATION | VANESSA VILLARREAL |
| | NATIONAL ANTHEM | MELONEE JOHNSON/ADRIANA MORA |
| | WELCOME | LEANN CANAS/PRESIDENT OF SENIOR CLASS |
| | PURPOSE | MR. DANNY NOYOLA/CIVIC MINDED SENIORS |
| | *Community Preamble | MELONEE JOHNSON |
| | *Civic Minded Seniors Slogan | AIYISAH MILLS |
| | *Community Flag/Civic Minded Seniors Flag | JULIAN RIVERA/GEORGE SIFUENTES |
| | *Declaration of Interdependence | REYES TORRES |
| | INTRODUCTION OF PLATFORM | Mr. RICHARD NINO/MR. ROBERT STONER CIVIC MINDED SENIORS |
| | *Education (Life Long Learning) Resolutions | SANDRA PENA/JOE LEAL |
| | *Economic Development (Jobs) Resolutions | KRISTY VALDEZ/CHRIS GOMEZ |
| | *Neighborhood Tranquility (Crime) Resolutions | MONICA SANDOVAL/ ALVORY WILLIAMS |
| | *Cooperation/Communication (Team Work) Resolutions | VERONICA CAVAZOS/ ELEUTERIO DAVILA |
| | *Technology (Computers) Resolutions | STEPHANIE VARGAS/ DANIEL SANDOVAL |
| | *General Welfare (Social Services) Resolutions | ADELINA RODRIGUEZ/ ROBERT GARCIA |
| | INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE | DANNY NOYOLA |
| | CANDIDATES FORUM | CANDIDATES ON NOVEMBER 5, 1996 ELECTION BALLOT AND ELECTED OFFICIALS |
| | BENEDICTION | CARLOS RAMIREZ |
| | ALMA MATER | WEST OSO HIGH SCHOOL BAND DR. MAURICE PORTIS, DIRECTOR |
| | ADJOURNMENT | BESSIE BALLIN/MELONEE JOHNSON/REYES TORRES |

Figure 4. West Oso Community Convention Program, 1996

Bittersweet Convention

Sadness surrounded the first convention. A member of the Molina community had passed away the year before and was now being remembered with a Hollywood movie. According to Noyola,

This convention was bittersweet because it came at the same time that the movie for Selena was being filmed. Selena was one of my students at the junior high. She was so talented and so full of life. When she died, I had to make the announcement over the PA system, and I just got choked up and started tearing up. A little over a year later they were making the movie and filming in Molina. I remember being on the set with Mr. Nava and Mr. Quintanilla, as some of our girls from the West Oso Cheerleading squad were able to be in a scene, but it was later cut out. I invited both the director and Mr. Quintanilla to the convention, but they were not able to make it. We still had a very good showing for that convention. I have to give credit to so many people just helping out. We even received an okay from Our Lady of Pillar Catholic Church where we grew up and went to church to make announcements. The priest allowed me to bring in four signs made by Dickie Valdez, a commercial art instructor at WOHS, about the convention. And we were allowed to showcase them at the church to get the word out during the morning masses (Interview, 12/24/2011).

Noyola had taken his work from the late 70's and early 80's as a teacher and applied it to the Civic Minded Seniors organization. Students were able to discuss problems and solutions in their civics courses. These problems and solutions would be utilized as the foundation for the convention. Since many of his students never left the city of Corpus, he wanted them to experience a national convention. Instead of creating signs with the names of states, Noyola made sure to get signs made with all of the street names from Molina. This would add a personal touch to the convention for the students and their parents. To tie the convention back to the government curriculum, Noyola made sure the students had rigorously studied the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and its Preamble.

Assigning roles and committees for each student was done through the civics course. Noyola said,

It was going to be the first convention, and we wanted to get a person who would be the Thomas Jefferson of this community and therefore write a declaration of interdependence. Reyes Torres volunteered to do this. He looked at the Declaration of Independence and modeled it after that but with interdependence. We discussed the importance of the U.S. Constitution in the class, and we focused on the Preamble. Melonee Johnson took it upon herself to write a preamble for our convention. In every class, students looked at how we could improve our homes, our community, our school, our nation — whatever we addressed in that preamble. The students identified those, and we used those as a template. Each

area had a different group of students to look over that section. As one of the teachers, I could get input from each class and provide that information to those committees, so they could write up their overall proposals for the convention (Interview, 12/24/2011).

The 1st West Oso Community Convention sponsored by the WOCMS had a live feed into radio Majic Q 105.1, and the controller of the feed was the owner of the station, Humberto Lozano Lopez. This convention was broadcast live throughout the coastal bend via radio and through the Domingo Show television program. Noyola remembers:

We had a long extension cord to the mic, and we just placed the telephone on the mic. It was a very humble set-up. We had a rock and roll pep rally for the community with our high school band under the leadership of Dr. Maurice Portis, future principal of West Oso High School. The convention was an overwhelming success. It set the stage for all other events to follow. We had booths for fundraising for clubs. They sold food and drinks in the cafeteria. It was a lot of great PR for Molina. Attending the convention was the future mayor of Corpus Christi and Nueces County Judge Loyd Neal. Loyd contacted me about attending the convention because he had seen it in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. He just came, and during the convention we recognized Mr. Neal and announced he might be running for mayor (Interview, 12/24/2011).

After Coach Rocky had led Noyola towards the path of administration, he realized how much more one could accomplish for their community with additional networking and access. He made sure to always keep political figures and political hopefuls knowledgeable about the issues facing his beloved Molina. Noyola himself wanted to be the vehicle for change and had sought out the WOISD superintendent position on several occasions:

I applied for the position many times. The first time, I was interviewed with Supt. Rowell. He asked where did I see myself in 5 years, and I said in your position right there. I didn't get the job, but I will say that Rowell did give me a great opportunity when he got me involved with the Texas School Improvement Initiative (TSII). We would visit low performing campuses and special programs throughout the state, and I did that for eight to nine years. And it really gave me a lot of research and insight into education, and it really helped me to go in as a superintendent with a lot of knowledge. That would never have happened if I was hired the first or second time around. It was world-class training. On my fourth time applying for the position, I got the job. I think it was really clear in the interview who had West Oso's best interest in mind (Interview, 12/24/2011).

Daniel Noyola, Sr., would replace outgoing Superintendent Dr. Frank Hogan. One of Noyola's main suggestions during his interview process was for the school board to look within for a superintendent. Noyola said:

There were four finalists: myself, Assistant Supt. Dr. Lynn G. Porter, Dr. Jesse DeRusse - Federal Programs Director, and an out of town administrator by the name of Hughes. You go through the interview process and it always comes down to why you instead of the others. I made the point that the superintendents we hired just left us. They were using WOISD as a stepping stone. Within a decade we went through three Anglo superintendents: Ron Rowell got his doctorate and left to TEA; Arthur Gregory received his doctorate and moved on; Dr. Frank Hogan left to Beeville from 3A to 4A. I emphasized in my interview that I was from the community and wanted to stay here to help it improve not to just use it as a stepping stone for a better position. (Interview, 12/24/2011)

Superintendent: 1997-99

These next years at West Oso were characterized by extreme emotional highs and lows. On Saturday, June 28, 1997, the title and bi-line of a *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* local section article stated, “Danny Noyola named West Oso superintendent [’71 valedictorian and current principal picked from four finalists].” The opening line of that same article read, “A product of the West Oso Independent School District will be its new leader.” Articles like these were the high points of his tenure at West Oso, because they made Noyola feel as if the district was going to accomplish great things.¹ As

¹ *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* articles: “West Oso’s Danny Noyola hopes to teach youths lifelong lessons, civic-mindedness” – 8/10/97; “West Oso grows its own” – 8/15/97; “Civic forces unite” – 9/1/97; “West Oso school board votes to hold October bond election” – 9/9/97; “Group offers land to city for ballpark” –

superintendent of WOISD, Noyola had greater access to the media and more leverage to discuss the problems facing the district than he did as a principal:

As superintendent, you had access to everyone from other superintendents to City Hall and county government. And you could see the changes we were making with proposals to bring in economic development, expanding educational opportunities through AVANCE, and bringing in needed health care and social services (Interview, 12/24/2011).

During these initial high points, School Board President Frank Garcia and board member Lucas Jasso explained, to various media outlets, why Noyola was selected over the other finalists. Each of them commented about the need for longevity. Garcia said, “I was looking for some longevity, what was best for our district in my opinion, and he’s shown that in the past” (Corpus Christi Caller Times, 6/28/1997). While Jasso’s quote was more stark in nature, “Noyola is clearly not using this as a stepping stone in his career path. Mr. Noyola will either leave here in a pine box or be carried out. He is stable, has knowledge of the community, and is very respectful.” (*Nuestras Vidas Magazine*, 11/1997, p.5) By the time of Noyola’s appointment in 1997, he became the fourth WOISD superintendent since the onset of the 1990’s. If longevity was a key component, Mr. Noyola’s experience (23 years with the district), and the fact that he was

9/24/97; “West Oso Hall of Fame gets five new members” – 10/19/97; “New Health Center for West Oso area” – 10/1/98

a product of the WOISD system seemed to get him noticed by others outside the district as a reasonable choice for the job.

Right away, Noyola went to work on “civic-mindedness” initiatives. He spoke at the Corpus Christi Coffee Club (a local organization that discusses political activity in the area), and there were photos in the August 10, 1997 edition of the *Corpus Christi Caller Times* of Danny passing out the West Oso (Thinking, Leadership, Cooperative) T.L.C. School District and Community plan to local area groups. He had an overarching vision for the school district. Noyola wanted to bring in businesses and economic growth to assist the tax base and improve employment opportunities for the community. Noyola’s vision was one of the reasons the school board wanted him to lead the district. The school board had seen what he had done during his administration to bring in business and academic partners to assist in the community and had heard about his work with the Civic Minded Seniors organization over at the high school. Noyola inspired young people to get involved; the school board had taken notice and rewarded him with the top leadership position in the district. As Noyola explains:

I was in a cloud my first year. Everything I wanted for our community, I could see happening. As far as getting things done for West Oso, those two years as superintendent were great. We did great things. It was just the school board relationship that was unbearable. At the end, it just felt like no matter what was accomplished for economic development — community improvements, test

scores — nothing seemed to matter to the board anymore. Just like that, it all started to crash around me (Interview, 12/24/2011).

Chapter 4: Noyola's Decline in WOISD

Political and Familial Turmoil: 1998-1999

This section of the dissertation seeks to show the sequence of events leading to the resignation of Daniel Noyola. To discuss the various happenings during this timeframe, however, smaller time segments will be chunked together in a visual timeline sequence. The timeline will allow the reader to revisit the sequence of events in visual form. This section will cover the political aspirations of one Noyola sibling to the filing for City Council District #3 position by two of Daniel Noyola's family members: Jesse Noyola, his brother, and Aida Lopez, his sister-in-law.

Table 2. West Oso Timeline #1

| West OSO Timeline #1 | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Election Bargaining | Election Announcement | Molina Rumors | Neutrality in Election | Partnerships for WOISD | Turmoil in WOISD |
| <i>May '98</i> | <i>June '98</i> | <i>July/Aug. '98</i> | <i>Aug. '98</i> | <i>July-Dec. '98</i> | <i>Sept-Dec. '98</i> |
| Lopez wins board seat. Jesse Noyola asks Lopez if she wants to run for City Council. He says if she does not, he will. | After Lopez says she will not run, Jesse Noyola announces his run for Dist. #3 at the Coffee Club. | Rumors begin in the Molina neighborhood that Aida Lopez will run for City Council. | Supt. Noyola tells both potential candidates that he will not be involved in the election. | Supt. Noyola continues to move "civic- minded" partnerships and projects forward. | Both Jesse Noyola and Aida Lopez seek political support within and outside of Molina. |

The Beginning of the End: From Bargaining to Severed Ties

During May of 1998, Aida Lopez, the sister-in-law of Daniel Noyola, Sr., was serving on the WOISD School Board from a recent election win. Commissioner David Noyola, younger brother of Daniel Noyola, Sr., was featured in a political pulse story

entitled, "Candidates get support from Noyola, Commissioner helped school board winners." (Corpus Christi Caller Times, 5/10/1998) The article further states, "He and brother Jesse Noyola and West Oso school board member Arnoldo Rodriguez Jr., among others, sat under a large sign advocating votes for school board candidates Frank Garcia and Aida Lopez, the eventual winners." Jesse Noyola, the brother and former student of Daniel Noyola, Sr., felt that the incumbent for Corpus Christi City Council District #3, John Longoria, was not representing the community. Jesse Noyola went to speak with Aida Lopez, whom he helped campaign for a WOISD board trustee position, to ask her if she would be willing to run for City Council against incumbent John Longoria:

I approached Aida in May about running against John. She already had name recognition in Molina as a [WOISD] School Board Trustee. I told her I would back up her campaign and help in any way I could. She said she wasn't interested in running for City Council because she wanted to concentrate on the school board. I let her know someone needed to run against him, and if she didn't want to, I would. Aida made it clear she wasn't going to run, so I announced in June at the Coffee Club (Interview, 12/24/2011).

The Coffee Club was a group that came together to discuss politics and other community issues in the city of Corpus Christi, Texas. Those interested in running for political office often made a visit to announce their candidacy to the group. As the Coffee Club was broadcasted on public access television, it was also a way to receive free

press for your campaign and/or community event. Daniel Noyola, Jr., who had served as a host to the show, stated, “The majority of the membership in the Coffee Club was comprised of senior citizens. They were the old Latino guard of the city, as they had a grassroots machine that could assist any campaign.” (Interview, 6/15/2010). Shortly after Jesse Noyola made his announcement on the Coffee Club, rumors began to fly in Molina that Aida Lopez was upset with Jesse and that she wanted to run for City Council. Jesse remembers:

We would see each other in public, and we were respectful. But I just knew something wasn’t right. She was just putting on a show. We both knew I had asked her already, and she said no. And now she wanted to pretend she wasn’t running when she was already asking around. If you are serious about a campaign, you have to get support early on, because a campaign with limited money needs people to help. I announced publically, so I was already out there. I know Aida was trying to get support, but she was trying to do it quietly. Molina is too small not to know what people are doing (Interview, 12/24/2011).

Daniel Noyola, Sr., was in a no-win situation. His baby brother was running for public office, and he wanted to support him, but he couldn’t as his sister-in-law, who was one of his bosses on the school board, might be running for the same position. “I told them in the summer, whoever ran for the office, I would not get involved. I promised both of them I would stay neutral. I didn’t want to, but I had to. So I did” (Interview,

12/24/2011). In the meantime, Daniel Noyola continued to press on issues he felt needed to be addressed: obtaining scholarship commitments from local area universities for top West Oso graduates, building a social services one-stop-shop in the neighborhood with a lighted walking track, getting the new elementary built as part of the bond election allocation, and finding funding for a new health center to be opened in Molina. These were just a few of his target goals. While Daniel Noyola was networking to ensure opportunities for his beloved Molina, his family members were also networking to get their campaigns off the ground. In January of 1999, both Jesse Noyola and Aida Lopez filed to run for Corpus Christi City Council District #3.

Table 3. West Oso Timeline #2

| West OSO Timeline #2 | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 Molina Candidates | WOISD Evaluation | Heated Campaign | City Council Run-off | Incumbent Retains Seat | Supt. Placed on Restriction |
| <i>Jan. '99</i> | <i>Jan. '99</i> | <i>Feb./Mar. '99</i> | <i>Apr. '99</i> | <i>Apr. '99</i> | <i>Apr. '99</i> |
| Jesse Noyola and Aida Lopez both file to run against incumbent in City Council election. | Supt. Daniel Noyola receives lower ratings than anticipated on performance evaluation. | David Noyola, current County Commissioner and <i>Comentarios</i> radio talk show host, blasts Lopez on the air. | Incumbent Councilman John Longoria and Jesse Noyola in run-off. Aida Lopez supports incumbent. | Incumbent retains seat by 31 votes over Jesse Noyola. Announces his win at Lopez wedding event. | Superintendent Daniel Noyola, Sr. given several restrictions from West Oso ISD School Board. |

With the new year came the official announcement: Jesse Noyola and Aida Lopez, both of Molina, would run against incumbent John Longoria. This situation did not help the already deteriorating relationship between the Noyola and Lopez families. As campaigning began, each family spoke less and less. Neither side trusted the other. David Noyola, brother to Noyola, Sr., felt betrayed by the Lopez family, whom he had

assisted with school board elections. In fact, he mentored Arnold Rodriguez, adopted son of Joe and Aida Lopez and, at 18 years of age, the youngest board member in West Oso history. David Noyola, then county commissioner and radio talk show host for *Comentarios*, began to discuss his differences on the air about the Lopez campaign. As Noyola explains:

By that time, I didn't give a shit. They [Lopez] screwed us. If it was me, I would have just run. I wouldn't have asked Aida if she wanted to run. But Jesse is like that, a good guy, and he got screwed. Danny, too, is like that, always the good guy trying to do what's right. And Aida was screwing with him too. So I let her have it on the radio. I told the audience that she wasn't for the people. She was for herself. And John, he was a bought man and never represented the district (Interview, 6/20/2009).

On Sunday, April 4, 1999, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* reported, "Incumbent John Longoria faces a runoff with Southwest Airlines baggage handler Jesse Noyola in the District 3 City Council race." The election was very close with Longoria taking 38% of the vote, Noyola with 23%, and Lopez with 21%. A mere 94 votes separated Noyola and Lopez for the second place finish. (<http://www.caller2.com/autoconv/councilelection99/councilelection11.html>) During the week, the Lopez family campaigned against Jesse Noyola on the West Side. It was an uncomfortable time at the election polling sites for the Noyola and Araiza/Lopez family (Aida Araiza married Jose

Lopez, and their children are both Lopez and Araiza). These families once supported each others' political efforts but now were on opposite sides. David Noyola recalls Aida and her sons campaigning against his brother Jesse:

Yeah, she was there with her kids. They campaigned a lot for John [Longoria] especially at Skinner and Kennedy [polling locations]. She worked it, but we kicked her ass at Skinner. They beat us in Kennedy. The Lopez' are a huge family. That's what threw them over, but it was still close" (Phone interview, 11/22/11).

Corpus Christi City Council elections are non-partisan. That is, candidates do not place their political affiliations on the ballot. However, the 1999 City Council runoff race was going to be close. Normally, the incumbent is at a significant advantage, but in this case, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* editorial board, with hesitation, endorsed Noyola over Longoria because "Noyola has never held elected office, though the Noyola family name is well known in political circles. But District 3 voters can expect that Noyola's focus on the district's needs will be closer than that of Longoria, who has lost touch with his constituents" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, April 10, 1999). The *Caller-Times* had previously leaned towards conservative candidates, so when the newspaper tipped its hat to a man whose family members were well-known Democrats, it seemed as if the Noyola campaign had a shot to win.

However, endorsements became crucial. Lopez, who had campaigned like all other non-incumbent candidates that new representation was needed for the District, decided to endorse Longoria (who was known as the Republican candidate when the race became close and partisan). Both sides of the family (Araiza and Noyola) found out about these endorsements through local media outlets. The *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* reported:

Longoria has also picked up the endorsement of Aida Ariaza Lopez, a Democrat who came in third with 21 percent of the vote, or 960 votes. ‘She had no money but strong support, and I think that her votes will come with her,’ Longoria said (April 11, 1999).

As the votes came in on election night, this alliance proved a critical one, as the incumbent won the election by a meager 30 votes. Jesse filed for a recount, and it was revealed that the election was won by 31 votes. According to Jesse Noyola,

I thought now Aida will let it go. She beat me by helping the incumbent, so we should all just shake hands and work for the betterment of Molina. That’s politics. But she didn’t let it go. I saw her go after my brother and after the community itself (Oral history interview with Jesse Noyola, June 20, 2010).

What happened next stunned members of the family on both sides. Lopez had invited Councilman Longoria to a wedding event at which he stood by her and publically thanked the Lopez family for their support. Generally, a winning candidate makes their

victory speech from the city hall or with their own victory party, but not this time. Longoria said if it wasn't for them, he wouldn't have won, and he was probably right. There are 16 immediate members of the Lopez family, not including the children of those family members. Those votes alone ensured Longoria his narrow margin of victory. Even more shocking to the Noyola family than the endorsement were the odd restrictions from the WOISD school board that came about right after the election runoff. Each of Noyola's siblings felt the school boards' actions to follow were motivated by political revenge. As David Noyola contends:

There is no doubt in my mind that Aida wanted to bring a Noyola down, and she set her sights on my brother, Danny. Jesse could come back in two years and win, which he did, and Aida knew that. So what could she control? She could manipulate the school board. One of the members [Arnold Rodriguez], who used to do and sell drugs, already lived with her. (Interview, June 20, 2010).

The statement of a board member having sold or done drugs in the past and living with another board member seemed as if might be inflammatory or exaggerated talk from an upset family member. However, from the *Tejano Voices Oral History Project*, Arnold Rodriguez's interview verified the claim:

“My childhood, I, really I lived a lot on the streets. I started kind of like a bad apple...sold drugs to the age of sixteen. I did drugs; became an alcoholic at the age of twelve; I was suicidal. I was very depressed until the age of sixteen when I

moved into a relative of mine, one of my second cousins. Jose Manuel Lopez, Sr., and [Aida] Araiza Lopez and now, I call them my mother and father. I've been living or I've been in with them for ten years.” (http://library.uta.edu/tejanovoices/xml/CMAS_079.xml)

By April 11th, John Longoria was reported as the runoff winner with a potential recount looming, which would not change the outcome of Longoria as the winner. Isabel Noyola, one of Daniel Noyola, Sr.'s sisters, believes this election sealed her brother's fate:

I remember talking with Aida, who was trying to convince me that she wanted to run first. So at first, I sided with her. But then as time went on, I saw that Aida was being sneaky. Before this I thought she was great and never knew Aida was capable of doing anything malicious. Everything she did caught me by surprise. So I helped Jesse by campaigning for him. I think Aida knew it would be close because we all campaigned hard. She thought Danny was helping Jesse, but he never campaigned for him. Neither Alma or Danny did any campaigning at all. She just wanted to find a way to get back at a Noyola, and she did it to Danny instead of Jesse or David. It was damn diabolical if you ask me (Phone interview, 11/22/11).

Less than two weeks after the election results, on April 22nd, the West Oso school board gave Superintendent Danny Noyola, Sr., the following directives:

1. “You are hereby given a directive not to interfere, communicate, either in writing or otherwise, with any of the Board member’s employers. Violation of this directive by you (Danny Noyola) will mandate Board action against the superintendent’s contract to the extent provided by federal law, state law, and local and legal policies, and the superintendent’s contract. There will be no toleration of any violation on this directive.”
2. “Directive is hereby given to Danny Noyola, superintendent of schools to report to the board of Trustees any and all travels outside the school district boundaries which results in three (3) or more hours away from the school district within 48 hours from the day of departure unless it’s a family emergency. Violation of this will result in immediate action against the superintendent.”
3. “You are hereby directed to comply with the agenda preparation policies found in the West Oso Independent School District Local Policy BE (Local). Specifically, the superintendent shall not remove from the agenda any item or subject which has been requested to be placed on the agenda by a trustee. This directive shall take effect immediately. Violations of this directive shall result in action against you (Danny Noyola), superintendent by the Board of Trustees.” (WOISD Directives, April 22,1999 – Faxed Copy, April 28,1999)

These directives would have serious implications on how Superintendent Noyola would be forced to conduct the business of West Oso ISD. As a superintendent of schools, you are the chief executive officer of the district. As such, it is through you, that day-to-day district business is conducted with a variety of local, state, and potentially national organizations and institutions. Through the use of micromanaging legal directives, the superintendent had his hands tied as to how to conduct the day to day business of WOISD. For example, Board President Frank Garcia was employed in the maintenance department of CCISD. At the time, the head executive for CCISD was Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra, which meant mere CCISD partnership discussions needed to be pre-cleared. Aida Lopez, the vice-president who would become secretary, was employed by the Coastal Bend AIDS Foundation, which had grant monies invested in WOISD. To re-enter into a contract agreement, special permission was needed. Mario Rincon, board trustee and city manager, the entire City Council, and the city's mayor were also off the list of potential community members with whom Superintendent Noyola would be able to speak and confer regarding WOISD issues without prior board clearance. Noyola remembers:

I was completely caught off guard by these directives. You can't be insubordinate, so you have to do your job. But you start looking at grievances as an option. My lawyer at the time, Rene Rodriguez, went straight to the media (Interview, 6/20/2009).

Scandal: 1999

Table 4. West Oso Timeline #3

| West OSO Timeline #3 | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TEA Grievance | Political Payback | Civic a Bad Word | Supt. on Agenda | TEA Monitor | Resignation Thoughts |
| <i>May '99</i> | <i>May '99</i> | <i>June '99</i> | <i>July '99</i> | <i>July '99</i> | <i>Sept. '99</i> |
| Supt. Noyola files a grievance with the Texas Education Agency indicating that the WOISD School Board is overstepping its authority. | Councilman Longoria cuts funding to Molina area and states, "They challenged me and lost. I had to make them pay." Some believe he did so at the request of Aida Lopez. | Aida Lopez indicates that civic activities should be removed from WOISD. Lopez steps down as Secretary and allows trustee Liz Gutierrez to take over the position. | Liz Gutierrez proposes the word "civic" be removed from board policy and asks for the Supt.'s job performance to be placed on the agenda. | The TEA finds that the WOISD School Board has overstepped its authority and violated board policy. The TEA recommends a monitor. | Supt. Noyola believes the TEA monitor won't be enough to assist West Oso. He decides to resign his position hoping it will alleviate the rancor on the board. |

At this point in time, Daniel Noyola, Sr., begins to work on the grievance process through the Texas Education Agency. He could not have foreseen that the political ire from the runoff would spew into the Molina community itself. Noyola was well aware of how his siblings felt about Lopez, but Noyola, Sr., still needed to work with her in order to get things done for the district. Politics had to be put aside, but unfortunately they weren't. Less than a month after the West Oso ISD directives, Councilman Longoria spearheaded a proposal "to cut \$143,000 as an act of political payback to the Noyola family" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, May 19, 1999). This newspaper reported, "Jesse Noyola ran against Longoria and lost by 31 votes this spring. The money would have been sent to the West Oso Independent School District, where Danny Noyola, Jesse Noyola's brother, is superintendent" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, June 8, 1999).

Although the council originally voted in a unanimous decision to cut the funding, the council later reversed itself and voted to approve a fraction of what the city staff had recommended. When asked why Councilman Longoria made the proposal to cut funding he said, "They challenged me and lost. I had to make them pay" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, June 8, 1999).

Although the Noyola family had been involved in politics for some time, never had they seen anything like this. Danny Noyola, Jr., recounted,

I remember John Longoria talking to the media saying he never said those things publically or that they were not supposed to be on the record, then later he tried to deny it all, and finally he just apologized for what he did. John said he had spoken with WOISD school board members before his decision to make the cuts in CDBG funds and that he would move to fully fund the project in the following year. We [Noyola family] pushed Councilman Longoria on it because my dad and I knew he didn't talk to my father, and President of the School Board Frank Garcia also said he never talked with John. In fact, no one admitted talking to Longoria, but our family all believed it was our aunt Aida Lopez. Too many weird things had happened since tio Jesse announced he was running for City Council. How do you go from getting a four-year contract because of how strong the board felt about dad's work and then to these crazy school board directives? I feel sad, but I know it was my aunt. So did the entire Molina community, and that is why she [Aida Lopez] had one of the worst political spankings for an

incumbent WOISD board member when she ran for re-election in 2001. In May of 1999, Shirley Jordan, Lucas Jasso, and Hector Gomez did not file to run for re-election and in 2000 Arnold Rodriguez and Mario Rincon don't run for re-election (Interview, 6/20/2010).

Since Daniel Noyola, Sr., was in the process of having his grievance heard by the TEA, he was still under the directives imposed on him by the school board. Noyola, Sr., felt so strongly about the social service center project that he took a personal day to advocate for it at the City Council meeting. Taking a personal day allowed him to show up at the meeting not as a superintendent but as a concerned citizen fighting with the rest of those from Molina. The West Oso community fought back, and on May 19, 1999, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* reported that,

[a] proposed West Oso social service center that was nearly eliminated from City Council consideration will receive \$50,000 after all. The City Council on Tuesday reallocated a portion of the federal grant money originally intended for the project after Councilman John Longoria apologized to West Oso area residents and the Noyola family for comments that appeared in Sunday's *Caller-Times*.

Longoria had apologized for his political payback, but now the word "political," and more specifically the word "civic," was next. Daniel Noyola, Sr., had used the words

Civic Minded since his teaching days at WOISD. Noyola named student organizations and initiatives civic-minded as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. The words Civic-Minded are to this day synonymous with the student organizations he built and the additional ones that would be carried on by his children. Aida Lopez planted the seed to take out the word civic from school board policy.

The following month the school board tackled the word “civic” in their school board policy section GKD (Local). On June 29, 1999, the approval of the June 14, 1999, regular board meeting minutes took place. Board trustee and son of Aida Lopez, Arnold Rodriguez would be absent from this meeting. Five days later in an interview for *Tejano Voices*, he praised the Civic Minded Students but made no mention of Mr. Noyola as the founder or sponsor of the organization. One item of particular interest was brought up by Ms. Lopez, now on the board meeting agenda as Aida A. Lopez, secretary. She commented

that some concerns that have come up are that the facilities are being used for political campaigning or political parties using the facilities, different city organizations. That is a concern. Anything having to do with political issues (WOISD school board minutes, June 1999?).

Several other board members had questions regarding fees and facilities use, and Noyola responded to them by stating, “no fees are charged for political party conventions as per public policy. The Democratic Party pays for facility usage of electricity/custodian clean

up. District's facilities have been used by the Democratic Party for about 15 to 20 years" (WOISD school board minutes, June 1999?). After further questioning as to whether the district had to allow this, Noyola stated, "the County Convention has been a tradition for the past two decades. This [practice] has been inherited." Ms. Lopez then asked that the West Oso attorney look into the matter and asked if this could be added to district policy and brought up by the board. The attorney, Mr. Juan Vega, suggested that the facilities be used only to benefit students, and Mr. Noyola followed with a request of wanting to have a balanced policy that was "not too lax and not too restrictive" (Board meeting, approval of minutes section, June 29, 1999). As requested by Ms. Lopez, this issue would be brought up to the board, but by then she would no longer be secretary.

Aida A. Lopez resigned from her position as secretary, and the Board appointed Mary Elizabeth "Liz" Gutierrez to replace her just prior to the July 6, 1999, fax transmittals sent from Board Trustee Liz Gutierrez. In those two transmittals, Ms. Gutierrez asked the following: "Would you please let Mr. Rincon know that I would like these items on the agenda: GKD-rewording and taking out "civic." Also, 99-2000 graduation to be held elsewhere due to safety of our students and parents and community." The second fax on the same day added, "Please tell Mr. Rincon to put on the agenda for closed session the superintendent's jobs and duties." By then, it seemed that the WOISD board wanted Noyola out. During this time, Noyola lost 20 to 30 pounds and was hospitalized briefly.

Noyola's dream of helping not only the West Oso School District but the entire Molina community crashed. The complaint Noyola filed in May of 1999 with the TEA

was investigated, and on July 23, 1999, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* article reported its findings:

some board members are involved in the day-to-day operations of the district, which is the superintendent's job; a grievance hearing was held in open session of a board meeting in violation of board policy; agenda meetings were scheduled by more than just the board president and the superintendent, a violation of board policy; some board members acted as advocate for students during meetings with district staff and administration; and at times, the board had counted abstaining votes as votes against a measure, causing some measures to fail, when in fact, they should have passed.

In this article, it was explained that the TEA had recommended a monitor to assist the district. Daniel Noyola, Sr., and his wife knew very well how slow a bureaucratic system works. Even though Noyola had been vindicated by the TEA's findings, the working conditions were stressful. The couple discussed a possible resignation, but this information was not shared with their children. At each new board meeting, the agenda always had an item about the superintendent's jobs and duties. During one of the last board meetings before Daniel Noyola, Sr., announced publically that he would resign, his son, Noyola, Jr., read this heartfelt statement to the board at the age of 16:

My father didn't know I was going to speak today. I typed this up in my school's library in the morning. As far back as I can remember, my father, Danny Noyola, Sr., has always been very involved in the West Oso Independent School District. Working for West Oso for the past 26 year has brought him great joy. I have learned a lot by listening and viewing the actions of this board. Not all has been good. However, I continue to come to these meetings for I know there is good in everyone and that justice will prevail. In the two years that he has been superintendent, TAAS scores have gone up, dropout rates have gone down, and there was a passage of a bond issue to build a new elementary. These are the results, but it hasn't been a one-man show. This has all come from teamwork that my father, Danny Noyola, believes in. Mr. Garcia, when my father was hired as superintendent you said you hired him because 'I was looking for some longevity, what was best for our district.' You know my father is a workaholic, and I used to think that working here at West Oso would kill him. But I was wrong — the thing that will kill him is being away from West Oso (1999 WOISD School Board Meeting Public Comments).

Danny Noyola, Jr.'s, words were prophetic. Sadly, Noyola, Sr., did die, not physically but emotionally. It was Noyola, Jr., who would aid his father after his resignation by helping him restore his passion for education.

Resignation

The Araiza (Daniel Noyola's wife's family) and the Noyola families, who grew up with each other in Molina, were now no longer on speaking terms. Some members of the Araiza side of the family wanted to remain neutral, mostly those who resided in other areas, such as Houston and Orange Grove, and/or were close to both Alma (Noyola's wife) and Aida (Alma's sister). There were two members of the Araiza family, Alma's mother, Andrea, and Alma's sister, Andy, who attended West Oso school board meetings and advocated for Alma's husband, Danny Noyola, Sr. Below is a *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* photo of Noyola supporters [Lonnie Garcia, community member; Dr. Xico Garcia, brother of Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, the late civil rights icon Dr. Hector P. Garcia; Marcos Noyola, father of Daniel Noyola, Sr.; Rose Marie Soto, community member; and Andrea Araiza Gonzalez, sister of Alma Noyola] standing outside the WOISD administration building during a closed session portion of the school board meeting. This situation only extended the deep rift among the Araiza family, which still lingers today.



Figure 5. David Pellerin/*Caller-Times* – Sept. 28, 1999

Noyola appreciated the support he received from the community, family, and friends, but it was not enough to get West Oso back on track. He made the toughest decision of his life: he would resign from his first love, West Oso. After the decision to resign was made, the ensuing months were times of grief for the family. His children and wife felt as if his body was with them but not his mind or spirit. It took a greater toll on his son as he recalls,

There were days when dad was just out of it. It didn't look good. He would get really sad, a type of sad I had never seen in him before. I don't even like to talk about it now. It's just too depressing (Interview, 6/20/2011).

In the midst of living through those times, Noyola, Jr., made it his mission to learn all about his father's career so he could help him with applications and resumes. To this day, no one knows more about Noyola, Sr.'s, career than Noyola, Jr. Together they filled out applications and created and updated portfolios with new graphics. Noyola, Sr., would sign off on some of the applications, and others he would not. Here was the baby of the family stepping up and taking care of others. This point in Noyola, Jr.'s life would serve as a foundation for his outlook on life and his pursuit of a career in education.

During the course of researching, the eldest member of the Araiza family, Amelia Cano, came forward with a letter she had written to her sister Aida after the resignation in November of 1999. Cano asked the other members of the Araiza family if she could have permission to draft a letter of apology to Daniel Noyola, Sr.'s parents, Marcos and Lucila Noyola. In addition, she wrote a letter of admonishment to her sister, Aida, and

brother-in-law, Joe Lopez. During her interview, she shared the reason she decided to take this action when she had previously been a neutral party: “It is when I went with my brother, Johnny, and we both saw how sickly your father looked. It was just too much to bear. So I asked my siblings if I could write these letters, and even my brother Johnny, after seeing Danny, said to do it” (Interview, 6/11/2011). Juan “Johnny” Araiza was one of Aida’s strongest supporters. Cano provided copies of the letters she sent, as well as the response from Noyola’s parents. These letters were uncovered in June of 2011, and below are copies of each: two in their entirety and only two of six pages of the last one. The first letter is from Cano to Marcos and Lucila Noyola asking for forgiveness. The second letter is the response to Cano from Marcos and Lucila Noyola. The final letter (of which two of the six pages are captured) is the letter of admonishment to Aida and Joe Lopez from Cano.

10/16/99

Mr. + Mrs. Marcos Noyola
4433 Valdez
Corpus Christi, Tx 78416

Dear Mr. + Mrs. Marcos Noyola,

I really don't know how to express the shame and guilt the Araiza family members have been experiencing since Denny's resignation from W.O.I.S.O. It was a painful public spectacle resulting in the wounding of Denny, Alma and their kids, which was totally undeserved.

Looking back at the incidents that occurred since the beginning of this year, I'm not sure this could have been avoided.

The only thing I can surmise from the event is that Aida was seeking revenge due to her unsuccessful bid in the political arena. This of course is no excuse for her behavior and destructive schemes. Aida has always had a problem keeping jealousy under control especially towards her siblings.

Unfortunately I know in my heart that Aida, her husband Joe and her children are going to pay dearly for their actions. My prayer is that God will have mercy on all of them.

Figure 6. Archival Letter p. 1, 1999

I was deeply moved by the humble behavior
your sons and daughters displayed throughout this
 ordeal. They never once fought back with vindictiveness,
but supported Danny & Alma in a noble and
dignified manner.

As far as Danny, Alma & their kids are con-
cerned, God already has a bigger plan ~~already~~
in the works for them. It's just a matter of time.
Danny and Alma have certainly withstood this
trial of refinement. The Bible in James 1:12 promises
"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because
when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown
of life that God has promised to those who love Him."
Romans 8:28 says "We know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love Him, who have been
called according to His purpose."

Mr. & Mrs. Marcos Noyola I hope you
can please find it in your heart to forgive
us and permit God to work out all of these
circumstances for good. May God Bless you
and give you His peace that surpasses all
understanding.

Con Mucha Cariño
Amelia B. Cano

P.S. I forgot to
mention at the beginning of the
letter Jim the eldest or the first born of Juan & Aracelia

Figure 7. Archival Letter p. 2, 1999

In this letter we discover that additional members of the Araiza family also felt that Aida Lopez was motivated by jealousy in politics. For many years, it seemed as if only the Noyola family felt this way. Finding these letters does not erase the pain suffered by Daniel Noyola, Sr., and his family, nor does it alter the outcome of the resignation, but it provides a sense of vindication. The existence of these letters, now that Daniel's father, Marcos Noyola, is no longer living does feel as if he was given the proper respect. In addition, the response by Lucila Noyola provides a sense of healing and actually explains why some members of both sides of the family were able to recover from the situation more easily than others.

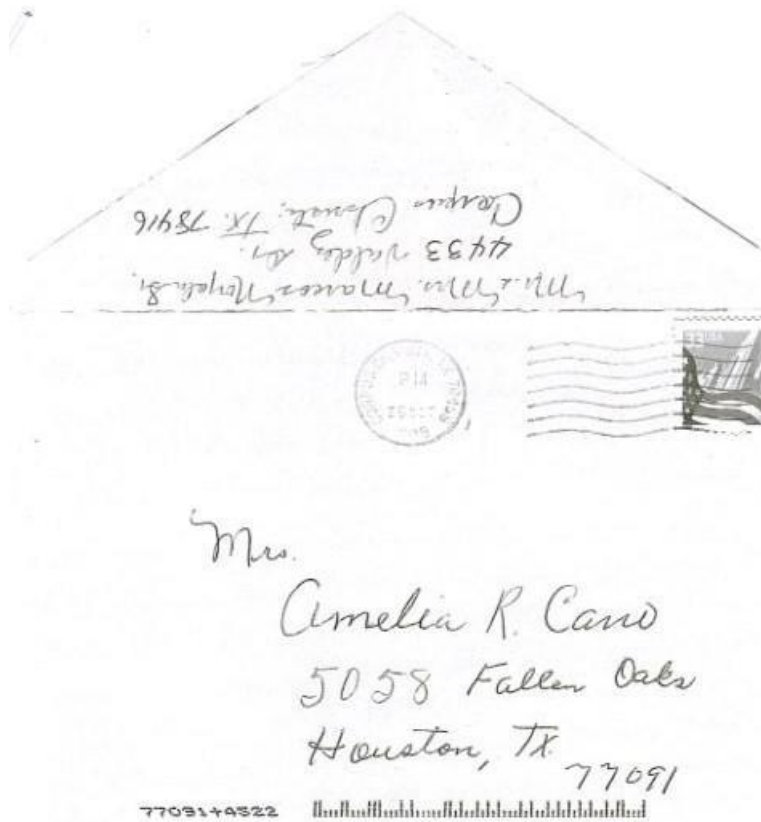


Figure 8. Archival Envelope, 1999

10/26/99

Dear Amelia R Cano

Please forgiving us for not getting back to you sooner. but I hope by this time you are feeling much better for what happen. but really amelia I was so glad to hear from you but I really ^{you} don't want to fill shame or guilt for ^{what} happen about Darryl. Make sure that we will never fill bad with all the Araiza fam. Cause ever since Darryl & Alma have been married all your fam. have become like our own fam too. Cause we have always care to be real close to each other and I hope God will always keep us like that. and we want to thank you for thinking about us. but please don't blame yourself for anything we want you to be happy and even if I don't get to see you often I always look about you so I thank you again and may God bless you always. Con much amor
Marion & Luis Hoyola.

Figure 9. Archival Letter Answer, 1999

11/02/99

Mr. + Mrs. Jose Manuel Lopez
4322 Elvira
Corpus Christi, Tx 78416

Dearest Joe + Gida,

I've been trying to write this letter for over two weeks, but I guess God's timing was not in place yet. I've written this letter to the both of you, because as a husband & wife, you are considered one flesh/one in spirit. Let's also not forget Joe, God made the man as the head of his household so it's imperative for you to read this letter with your wife.

First of all I'm not going to mince any words as I open my heart and soul to express the deep anguish and disgust I feel towards both of you in the schemes you maneuvered leading to Danny's resignation. Your underhanded tactics have nearly destroyed Danny's well-being not to mention Gilma (our bloodsister, A.D.N) and their children.

For the life of me I still can't comprehend what was going through both of your minds, especially your hearts as you conspired, plotted and implemented your plan of destruction, hate and vindictiveness towards our own family members!!!

Figure 10. Archival Letter2, first page, 1999

Joe and Aida, before its too late
I hope you will take time to seek God,
ask for His forgiveness with all your heart,
mind, soul, & strength not only for yourselves,
but especially for your children. Finally I hope
you will swallow your pride and take the
necessary steps to right this wrong as
quickly as possible.

I'll be more than glad to clarify ~~any~~
any of my comments contained in this letter.
Please don't hesitate to call me at your
earliest convenience. As always I will
continue to pray for you and your
~~for~~ family specifically that God will
grant His Peace, Love, & Well-Being. ~~to~~
Remember take action before its too late!!

Love

Amelia

Figure 11. Archival Letter2, final page, 1999

Although the uncovering of these letters in June of 2011, meant that portions of the dissertation had to be rewritten, they allowed parts of each of the Araiza and Noyola families to reflect. Amelia Cano, sister-in-law to Danny Noyola, Sr., commented:

In many ways, if Aida had not been as vindictive, the civic-minded legacy of your father might never have happened. This does not excuse or in any way condone what Aida did. But in order to heal, it helps to find the positive aspects that have come from evil deeds (Interview, 6/6/11).

Chapter 5: The Rise of the Civic Minded Students

Applications

In the words of a Noyola family joke, the road to healing is through applications. The Noyola family realized that resigning from the superintendent's position had left a wound in Noyola, Sr.'s heart equivalent to having lost a loved one. A newspaper report provided the words he said he would use for his (future) tombstone: "He believed in God, loved his family, loved his friends, and loved West Oso" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, 7/6/97). There was no denying that this institution had been a part of his life since birth. He was raised in West Oso ISD, he was educated in West Oso ISD, he met his future wife in West Oso ISD, and he worked 26 years in West Oso ISD. Leaving the district was like leaving a piece of his soul behind. Noyola's son believed that the answer was to locate a new job as soon as possible.

Of course, Noyola, Sr., did not want to apply for another school position. Noyola, himself, and others in the family believed that he might return to his old position. Jesse Noyola was quoted in the paper as saying, "[I]t is a possibility that [he] could return to the district in two years, after board elections. It's politics, Danny loves West Oso. Danny's not a quitter. He's a fighter" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Sept. 28, 1999). It was this glimmer of hope that the immediate family believed sank Noyola deeper into depression. Although Noyola, Sr., refused to apply for jobs, Danny Noyola, Jr., took on the role of agent and began to complete applications for him. Noyola, Jr., immediately

began a plan of action. He sought to find his dad a new job to get his mind off the loss.

As Noyola, Jr., recalls:

I used to go to the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) website, and we stuck to region #2 to look for superintendent positions available. We requested applications for positions in Kingsville, Beeville. We applied for a position in administration in CCISD. We really thought we would get the field agent position with CCISD. If he got it, he would help superintendents with school boards. But he did not fill out that application even though he was encouraged to get that position. We also applied for a junior high principal position in Mathis and assistant super in Robstown. We put a lot out there, but our major call backs were from Kingsville and Beeville. No matter how hard I tried to keep Oso out of the conversation, it would just come back in (Interview, 6-20-2011).

And West Oso indeed came back into the conversation on October 27, 1999. One month after Noyola's resignation, Dr. Frank Hogan, the former West Oso superintendent prior to Noyola's administration, committed suicide. The headline read:

Superintendent of Beeville ISD found dead - Beeville Independent School District
Superintendent Frank Hogan was found dead in his home Tuesday morning, the

victim of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest, police said (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Oct. 24, 1999).

Beeville ISD appointed an interim superintendent and began the process of trying to fill Dr. Hogan's position in the spring of 2000.

Another less macabre link to West Oso involves an ironic twist of fate. Shortly after Noyola's resignation, WOISD board member Liz Gutierrez filed her own complaint with the TEA asking them to "readdress Noyola's complaint," as she found board members were "violating the Open Meetings Act and violating board policy" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, 2/11/2000). When the TEA denied Trustee Gutierrez's complaint, she stated in the February 11th article, "They have just given these members more power to continue to do what they're doing. It is time for West Oso ISD residents to stand up and be heard in their voting and their opinions. A lot of people know that wrong is being done." Less than two months after this article, it was reported in the *Victoria Advocate* that Noyola, Sr. ,was one of six finalists to "have been chosen from 25 applicants as the Beeville school district searches for a new superintendent" (4-1-2000). He would not receive the position.

Moody High School Teaching and Department Chair

As a result of his applications, Noyola had a couple of job interviews with the Beeville and Kingsville ISDs, where he was a finalist for the superintendency positions. However, Noyola's turbulent experience with the West Oso school board gave him a

sense of wanting to get out of administration and return to his passion for teaching in the classroom. In the summer of 2000, Noyola was reading in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* newspaper about the promotion of Foy H. Moody High School American Government Teacher Steve Van Matre to a position with the Education Service Center Region 2. This article prompted Noyola to think about returning to teach a subject he loved at a school in a community that was similar to West Oso.

In fact, Moody's alternative area boundaries border the Molina neighborhood. Former colleagues and even some of Noyola's siblings felt he should not take the job because he was a former superintendent. However, he and his immediate family believed it was a good fit. Daniel Noyola, Jr., recounts:

We read in the newspaper that Steve Van Matre was going from Moody HS teacher to Educational Service Center Coordinator for Social Studies. I remember we were at tia Belay's house outside, and dad and I were talking about going back to teaching government. Dad thought it wasn't a bad idea and called Conrado Garcia when we were in Austin, Texas. Dad and I saw "Scary Movie" at the theater, and by the time it was over Garcia called back, and it went well. We got back to Corpus and filled out the application. Garcia said the job was his. I remember going by Moody, and we saw Steve Van Matre cleaning out room 919. It all happened so fast (Interview, 11/24/2011).

For the 2000-2001 school year, Noyola would be teaching social studies courses in the Corpus Christi Independent School District. At first, Noyola taught the entire gamut of courses: World Geography, Economics, Government, and World History. But two years later, he was back at his original passion: teaching American Government. Noyola, Sr., recalled:

I was given the department chair position. We were in the quarter system. We only had four courses during the semester on an accelerated block. You could, in a sense, take two cores and two electives in nine weeks. Every nine weeks was a new group coming in. I taught World Geography, Economics, Government, World History, and American History. My last three years at Moody, I was given only government courses (Interview, 6-20-2011).

During the 2000-01 academic year, Moody was one of five high schools in CCISD. Currently, Moody High School is known as the “Home of the Academies.” The initial smaller learning community was established in 2001-2002 as the Health Science Academy. Future Academies would be established in the areas of pre-engineering, industrial trades, arts and humanities, and business professions, owing in part to a nearly half-million dollar grant from the Department of Education. The school had a majority/minority composition with the highest concentration being its Hispanic population. Departmental heads were given latitude on how to handle their courses. Overall, it seems that the high school sought innovation in its curriculum offerings (by

implementing a small-schools learning approach), but the textbook was the primary resource for teachers. This backdrop would set the stage for Noyola's civic-minded initiatives.

Civic Minded Students

The Moody Civic Minded Students was founded in portable classroom number 919 at Moody High School in Corpus Christi, Texas. During that first year, 2000-01, Noyola employed the use of personal mission statements in his classroom. For him, it was important to recreate the close bonds one felt in a small community:

I really believe it's about getting to people's deep inner soul and forming connections. At Moody, I decided I'm gonna get some beautiful T-shirts like at West Oso, but instead of seniors, I changed the name to the Moody Civic Minded Students (Follow-up Interview, June 15, 2009).

Noyola purchased the shirts from good friend and former student George Villarreal of Commercial Screen Printing. Noyola allowed students in his other courses to design the front and back T-shirt logos, but this time he told George he already knew what he wanted on the back of the new shirts: "It was obvious to me — 'To Live, To Love, To Learn, To Leave a Legacy' — because that tells it all" (Follow-up Interview, 6/15/2009). The motto on the back of the shirt was directly tied to the personal mission statement assignment given to the students at the onset of each half-year government course.

One former Moody Civic Minded Student, Veronica (pseudonym), believes having students tell their stories prior to senior year is a key to motivating more young people from Moody to attend college. She said, “I think college admissions would find their stories compelling, if they had the encouragement to tell their stories and improve their situations instead of feeling like they’re stuck in this cycle. ” (Interview, 7/17/2009). Although one of the students from Noyola’s class, Richard (pseudonym), remembers the impact those personal mission statements had on classes and believes the assignment should be kept as a staple for government and AP government courses. He commented:

I’d keep it either way because it works on so many levels. It works on a personal level because it puts everything into focus, and it works on an interrelationship level between students as far as kind of bringing them together with commonalities, common interests (Interview, 7/2/2009).

The purpose of asking his students to write a personal mission statement, according to Noyola, was a way for him to connect with his students on day one. He focused on Stephen Covey’s books the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *First Things First*, and *Principle Centered Leadership*. As Noyola explained:

It’s a great thing to get to a person’s deep inner soul, because Stephen Covey tells us that all the great teams, all the great organizations, all the great corporations, all the great schools, if they get to the students or the clients or the workers or the

leaders' inner soul, great things are gonna happen. So, I introduce(d) my students to Covey's personal mission statements. I did it when I was a principal at West Oso High school; I did that when I was superintendent of schools (Interview, 7/25/2009).

Today, both of his children utilize personal mission statements in their respective government courses. Noyola, Jr., stated, "When you have close to 400 students a year, the personal mission statement just helps you connect with those students immediately. It is a wonderful teaching tool" (Phone follow-up interview, 6/15/2009).

And connect Noyola did with literally thousands of students over the course of his teaching career. Isabel Noyola-Martin remembers: "If you are with Danny, you see all the great work he has done. Former students just come up to him and thank him" (Interview, 11/22/2011). Students mention the year they graduated, and Noyola begins to rattle off all of the activities they participated in that year:

At one point I thought I was getting old because I would talk about these activities, and students would say, 'Sir, I don't remember doing that.' But then the more I thought about it, I heard that from students from two particular years at Moody. I remembered that those years we had block scheduling where students would get an entire half-semester credit in nine weeks. So those years, I had four cycles of students not just the standard two. Literally, students were participating in different activities and would not formally have experienced what the class the

nine weeks before or the class the nine weeks after did. So now it made sense and I felt relieved about getting old. Well, my body was, but at least my mind was still good (Follow-up interview, June 15, 2009).

What Noyola wanted more than anything was to make sure that every student had an opportunity to participate in civic activities. A flurry of ideas swept through his classes, and what the students wanted to do, under the guidance of the teacher and within the curriculum guidelines, the Moody Civic Minded Student organization would tackle. Noyola recalls,

We set up the Moody Civic Minded Students, and everybody's going to be a Moody Civic Minded Student. I saw other student organizations giving their members pins and other paraphernalia, and not all of our students have the time to devote to extracurricular activities, so they are already missing out on a great civic opportunity embedded within the schools. I spoke with my wife, and we decided that as the MCMS graduation gift every single student would receive a MCMS T-shirt paid for by us. This way, those who could not be in an organization because of work constraints or familial obligations would have been in at least one, and all of them would have a memento of their time in that organization (Follow-up interview, June 19, 2010).

Over the last twelve years, the sheer number of projects and activities the Moody Civic Minded Students have accomplished could fill up its own dissertation. Instead of delving into each one individually, they will be chunked into five groupings: electoral activities, service-learning projects, political and social awareness, advocacy activities, and fundraisers. These groupings were determined by asking each current and former civic-minded student advisor which subcategories they focused on under the overarching goal of citizenship. Each of these areas has activities, programs, and projects from all three members of the Noyola family, as each member has served as sponsor or co-sponsor to the Moody Civic Minded Students: Daniel Noyola, Sr. (2000-2005, as a teacher sponsor; 2006-present, as an administrative sponsor); Sonia Noyola (2005-09); and Daniel Noyola, Jr. (2009-present). In addition, each of Noyola, Sr.'s offspring has sponsored their own civic-minded organization that has partnered with the Moody Civic Minded Students: Daniel Noyola, Jr.'s South Park Civic Minded Knights (2006-2009) and Sonia Noyola's Collegiate Civic Minded Students (2009-present).

Electoral Activities

Danny Noyola, Sr., created a hands-on approach to teaching government. Noyola, Sr., believes: "The most natural activity for a government class is to talk about voting and electoral politics. That is probably why it is such a strong staple of most government curriculum; it's the basis of our democracy" (Interview, 6/20/2010). In the government courses at Moody High School of the three Noyola's (father, daughter, and son), electoral politics activities are similar but have varied from teacher to teacher. All

three teachers have sponsored voter registration drives (to encourage those eligible to register to vote); voter pledge drives (to encourage those already registered to vote); election labs (where students view a live election on election day and take process notes); the creation of public service announcements (creating 30 second to one minute ads to encourage voters to vote); and candidate forums (to allow students and community members to hear from the candidates themselves). These are annual staples of the government classroom.

What sets the electoral activities apart is determined by the teacher and students, who negotiate the additional activities needed for the year. For example, under Daniel Noyola, Sr., students have participated in block-walking activities (where students go from door-to-door to register community members to vote) and a 2004 Presidential Election Night Lock-In event (where students watched the returns come in at the school all night long). During Sonia Noyola's sponsorship, students were trained, and then they in turn cross trained community members annually on the E-Slate machine (electronic voting machine), created an election-day voter phone bank (to remind people to vote on election day, as in the photo below), and had the opportunity to attend the 2009 Presidential Inauguration of Barrack Obama. Currently, under Daniel Noyola, Jr., the Moody Civic Minded Students are pursuing a policy to allow non-voting youth delegates to serve on the CCISD School Board and Corpus Christi City Council. As a result, the Collegiate Civic Minded Students are pursuing a proposal for a non-voting youth delegate on the Del Mar Board of Regents.



Figure 12. Moody Civic Minded Students phone bank, 2008

Service-Learning Activities

Community Conventions

Although community conventions can definitely be housed under the electoral politics subcategory, they are placed under service-learning activities because students take greater control over the event and its content. Each member of the Noyola family has sponsored a Moody Civic Minded Students Community Convention event: Daniel Noyola, Sr. (2000, 2002, 2004); Sonia Noyola (2006, 2008); and Daniel Noyola, Jr. (2010). Noyola, Jr., explains why it has lasted so long at Moody High School:

The reason this event is done bi-annually at Moody is because dad did it with the West Oso Civic Minded Seniors and brought it to Moody. My sister and I did not do community conventions at South Park or Collegiate. Instead, we had our students attend the Moody Community Convention and contribute to that one because it was the parent organization (Interview, 6-20-2010).

Noyola obtained inspiration from teaching in WOISD and utilized those techniques at Moody High School. During his first year of teaching at Moody HS in 2000, a Community Convention was set up similar to the one hosted by the West Oso Civic Minded Seniors just four years earlier. Students brainstormed in their classes about community needs and put them in the forms of resolutions and plans of action for their convention. The new organization was booming with ideas. Students felt that Gollihar Road needed repair and that additional police security was essential in their neighborhoods because, as Noyola recalls,

scores of bullets were shot there on a street nearby Crockett Elementary, Belton, and that was a problem the kids were identifying. During the convention, students who lived on Belton street or any other street could find their street sign in the cafeteria and work with others from the area to discuss what needed to be done for that street or local school (Interview, 6/25/2010).

The photo below is from a *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* article showcasing the convention. The names that appear on the signs are the streets in which Moody High School students reside.

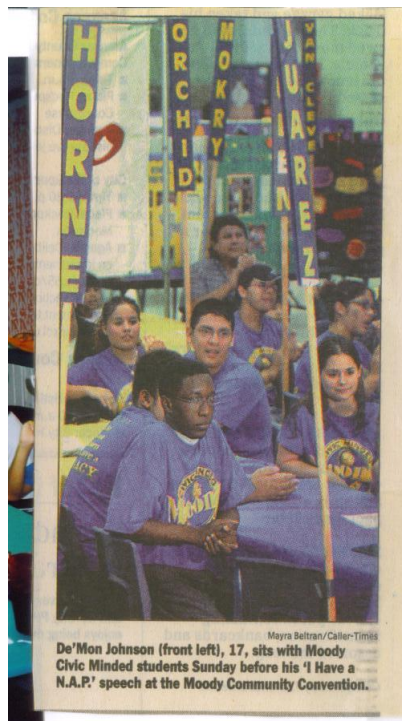


Figure 13. MCMS Community Convention Newspaper Photo, 2004

Noyola recalled,

Moody Civic Minded Students not only advocated for infrastructure and safety issues, they also wanted changes in their academic programs. They talked about how they're all supporting and advocating Mr. Garcia, the principal, who wanted to set up a magnet school kind of concept here with the health sciences in a

number of issues like that. And we put them all together, and we made that community convention a Moody Community Convention — the first annual Moody Community Convention. And we brought in all the candidates from the congressman to all the local elections. We invited the people who were running for president. They didn't show up, but we invited them (Interview, 6/25/2010).

Students in Noyola's class were allowed to take control and invite any political candidate they researched. Noyola's objective was to get students interested in the process and learning about their political system. This was not the only service-learning vehicle Noyola, Sr., created for his students to voice their concerns: others were *La Hora Civica* and the Moody Neighborhood Association.

La Hora Civica

La Hora Civica (The Civic Minded Hour) was established in 2002, by Daniel Noyola, Sr. Students from the Moody Civic Minded Students were the first to utilize the program and held various candidate debates, created issue awareness pieces, and performed community update segments. Alicia (pseudonym) remembered co-hosting the program,

I was also the co-host of *La Hora Civica*. We interviewed local politicians and also did the debates when it came time to vote. I remember being interviewed for the [*Corpus Christi*] *Caller-Times*. I also earned an award from Mr. Noyola at the

end of the year for my work with the TV show (Former student interview, see *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* article below).

In 2006, this television format, of sharing the hosting responsibilities with students, would be extended to the South Park Civic Minded Knights (then sponsored by Daniel Noyola, Jr.), and again in 2009, to the Collegiate Civic Minded Students (sponsored by Sonia Noyola) for the dissemination of targeted civic initiatives and community updates. Due to the budget constraints of the KTMV studio system, *La Hora Civica* went off the air in the fall of 2010.



Figure 14. MCMS Newspaper Article, 2004

Moody Neighborhood Association

The Moody Neighborhood Association organizational summit occurred on April 2, 2003, and by the summer had evolved into the Corpus Christi Barrios Association. This organization was an offshoot organization founded by the Moody Civic Minded Students in order to address neighborhood improvement needs, but it became a grass-roots community organization that advocated for neighborhood improvements. The improvement areas on which it concentrated were

physical infrastructure development (streets, curbs, gutters, affordable housing, etc.) and human development infrastructure (early childhood/ early brain development, community schools, neighborhood associations' creation, recruitment, and block captains' program, etc.) (Interview, 6/25/2010).

The motto of the Corpus Christi Barrios Association is "Leave No Neighborhood Behind." This association served as an advocate for "affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, community schools, and livable/ learning communities" (Corpus Christi Barrios Association flyer, 2003).

The Corpus Christi Barrios Association was the first General Purpose Committee PAC in the city of Corpus Christi. It did not and does not endorse political candidates, but instead focuses on neighborhood improvement issues and initiatives by lobbying for the establishment of neighborhood associations, councils, representatives; partnering with the AGIF Foundation to build a Dr. Hector P. Garcia Historical and Education Center;

and fostering a number of initiatives including: endorse and advocate for affordable housing; endorse city of Corpus Christi tree ordinance; and the Pvt. Felix Longoria U.S. Post Office in Three Rivers, Texas (Corpus Christi Barrios Association History & Accomplishments Archive, 2005).

Daniel Noyola, Jr., and Sonia Noyola continued participating in the service-learning foundations established by their father, Noyola, Sr. The strong institutional infrastructure left in these areas allowed his children to pursue additional civic engagement programming with their students, such as Noyola, Jr.'s Graffiti Wipeouts and Sonia Noyola's Interest Group Forums.

Political and Social Awareness

All three Noyola's promoted political and social awareness activities as part of their government curriculum. Two major annual staple events were the Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez March & Rallies. These two marches promoted the honoring of past civil rights activists. Furthermore, when any prospect arose for students to see state or national political figures, they were provided the opportunity to attend. While these efforts could be categorized under electoral activities, each teacher felt they were more about creating an awareness of how to decipher political propaganda. During the 2008 Democratic Presidential primary, something happened that is quite rare for Texas politics. Winning the state of Texas was extremely important to Clinton and Obama, as every electoral vote during the primary race mattered. Both candidates came to Corpus Christi, Texas, that year. Daniel Noyola, Sr., and Sonia Noyola took over 60 Moody

Civic Minded Students to see the Clinton rally in Robstown, Texas. Daniel Noyola, Jr., then the South Park Civic Minded Knight sponsor, took over 20 students from this group to see the rally as well. When Barrack Obama came, Noyola, Sr., and Sonia Noyola were able to take over 90 students to the Corpus Christi American Bank Center to watch him speak.



Figure 15. Hillary Clinton Rally Photo, 2008

In addition to these two annual staple events and the political rally events (as available), all three teachers provided additional programs and projects to raise political and social awareness for their Moody Civic Minded Students. Daniel Noyola, Sr., created an AP Interdependence Summit and invited all CCISD high school government students to attend. It was in the spring of 2004 at the American Bank Center. Academic and political speakers were present, and they provided information on the latest political

happenings at the local, state, and national levels. Sonia Noyola, in 2005, began a Speaker's Bureau program for her Moody Civic Minded Students (MCMS). The most famous attendee presented information in 2008. Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers union with Cesar Chavez, served as a Speaker's Bureau presenter and imparted her knowledge of politics on both the Moody Civic Minded Students and the future students of the organization via the AP US History classes. Daniel Noyola, Jr.'s informational staple event is the MCMS Town Hall meeting. The Town Hall meeting format, established in 2011, provides direct contact with local political leaders on a semester basis. Originally established to provide classroom curriculum support, this program later led to an advocacy staple, which will be covered in the advocacy section of this chapter.



Figure 16. Dolores Huerta Speaker's Bureau Photo, 2008

Finally, one major staple event, annual Involvement Fairs/Walks, can be considered a service-learning activity, as it is organized by students. In this instance,

however, this event is used to provide civic engagement awareness to the community at large. The Involvement Fairs/Walks were created by Daniel Noyola, Sr., in 2001. These walks have been supported by Noyola, Sr., Sonia Noyola, and Noyola, Jr. The Involvement Walk was created to bring attention to the wonderful community and civic work of students from Moody High School and to advocate for further political and social involvement by the community (i.e., parents, teachers, elected officials, etc.). The photos below are of the first Involvement Walk on Sunday, March 7, 2004.



Figure 17. Involvement Walk Photo, 2004



Figure 18. Involvement Walk March Photo, 2004

As these walks have become a staple event for the Moody Civic Minded Students, other civic-minded groups (South Park CMK and Collegiate CMS) have joined as well. In the spring of 2010, Noyola, Jr., expanded the walks to include additional Moody Vertical Learning Community junior high schools. Last year's 2011 event included over 250 students, parents, and community members (see *Corpus Christi Caller Times* photo below).



Figure 19. Involvement Walk March Photo, 2011

At the end of the day, each Noyola educator feels the most important lessons in the MCMS government courses are those relating to advocacy activities.

Advocacy Activities



Figure 20. Austin Capitol Trip Photo, 2010

The primary staple advocacy activity each year for the Moody Civic Minded Students is the annual trip to the Texas State Capitol. The first trip was conducted in the spring of 2001 under Daniel Noyola, Sr. In the government courses, students study state and local problems and create research solution papers. These research papers are presented annually to their area state senator and state representatives. Each trip includes presentations, lunch at the Capitol, and trips to the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and the Bob Bullock Museum. This event allows students from each year to advocate for issues they see as necessary and relevant. Furthermore, this trip gives students the opportunity to see the history they have been studying in class. This legacy was also passed on to the Collegiate Civic Minded Students who began traveling with the group in the spring of 2010 and presented their own research policy solutions.

Daniel Noyola, Sr., taught for a mere five years at Moody High School. But in those five years, the accomplishments of the MCMS have yet to be surpassed. Noyola, Sr., recalls,

The five years that I was there, the students did a lot of awesome stuff. The first year we made a quick impact with that community convention. It was televised live on the Domingo Show with Moody in 2000. They came back and helped us out also in 2004, getting the word out about the things we want to do to improve the community. The students just hit a home run and, you know, Moody is baseball country. And the Moody magic comes out in the great work the students do (Interview, 12/1/2010).

It was through the establishment of the Moody Civic Minded Student Convention process that student ideas were brought forward and then implemented by current and future students until the completion of the projects.

The largest advocacy impact Noyola, Sr., and his MCMS had were the millions of dollars they brought into the community for infrastructure improvements and affordable housing. These initiatives were not accomplished by a single class, as each government class is only a semester in length. However, each subsequent class would take up where the previous class had left off in the process. For example, Noyola, Sr., remembers,

I'm recalling some of this. The semester we go to city hall and we come up with a video and concern that in the Sunnybrook area there's no sidewalks, curbs and gutters. [We] make a presentation there — the City Council, the city staff doesn't support it — but the kids are so outstanding in that presentation (Interview, 12/10/2010).

Noyola did not allow this project to die, but instead pushed the MCMS agenda established by the first class.

After reviewing several Moody Civic Minded Students History and Accomplishments archives, the following quote by Daniel Noyola, Sr., best summarizes the years in which the greatest advocacy, service learning, and research awareness campaigns were created (all under the original founder, Daniel Noyola, Sr.):

“We are also proud to say that the Civic Minded students from 2000-01 and 2001-02 supported the Southwood Addition to Sunflower Subdivision street and drainage improvements. These students acquired over 1,400 petition signatures in favor of this project. The students produced a powerful video that demonstrated the need for a \$35,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The Planning Commission and the City Council agreed and granted the CDBG funds for the preliminary design work to improve these streets with no sidewalks, curbs, and gutters in the Sunnybrook and Mansheim areas. In August 2002, the city was awarded a \$906,000 for first phase street and drainage improvements to this area. Ultimately, the three-phase construction and improvements will total in excess of \$16 million. (Interview, 6/25/2010)

On September 7, 2001, a new declaration was introduced by the Moody Civic Minded Students. It was called the “Declaration of Improvement” and was established to focus mainly on improvements to the community and the development of a Neighborhood Improvement Planning process. The Moody Civic Minded Students presented their Declaration of Improvement at the City Wide PTA Councils and the Moody PTA Open House where they received two standing ovations. Noyola, Sr., provided archival records indicating:

“Our students wrote position research papers about exemplary neighborhood improvement planning in various cities throughout the state and the country. The

students presented their planning process to the City Council in November of 2001. The council unanimously passed a formal resolution in January of 2002, endorsing the students' planning process. The students have written a Declaration of Initiative to propose a one-eighth-cent sales tax for Neighborhood Economic Development and Community Empowerment Zones (NED-CEZ). This initiative was introduced and presented to the mayor and City Council in duly posted meetings at the Moody Civic Minded Students headquarters in room 919. The students proposed \$2.5 million for neighborhood infrastructure improvements and affordable housing development annually. Initially, the Council rejected this proposition. Last summer, the Council did place \$500,000 for affordable housing on the ballot in November of 2002, and it passed with a comfortable margin. The affordable housing initiative passed will allocate up to \$7.5 million over the next 15 years. In April 2003, the Moody Civic Minded Students' Town Hall Meeting created and established the Moody Neighborhood Association (MNA) to empower and improve the community. A City Council Candidates Forum was conducted as well. The MNA is now the Corpus Christi Barrios Association. In 2003-04, we conducted the Moody Civic Minded Academy Awards and Involvement Fair in November of 2003 and the Involvement Walk and signing of the Declaration of Involvement in March of 2004. The walk on Leopard St. started at the CCISD Administration Building, passed the Nueces County Courthouse, and culminated at the steps of City Hall with improvement/involvement recommendations from the students and the signing of

the Declaration of Involvement by all. The 2004-05 Moody Civic Minded Student highlights included the 3rd Biennial Moody Community Convention and Candidates Forum, the Presidential All Night Election Returns Lock-In in the Moody High School cafeteria, the 1st Moody Civic Minded Students Talent Showcase, the 2nd Annual ‘Involvement Day in Corpus Christi’ Festivities and Walk, the 4th Moody Academy Awards presentations, and the 1st Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics Civic Minded Conference at the American Bank Center.” (Interview, 7/22/2009 -Daniel Noyola, Sr., archival records; *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Nov. 2, 2000; May 9, 2001, Corpus Christi Barrios Association webpage).

Daniel Noyola, Jr.

In 2011, Daniel Noyola, Jr., re-established the original Town Hall Meetings format established by Daniel Noyola, Sr., for inclusion into his Moody Civic Minded Student programming. Originally, these forums were set up for informational purposes as a way for Moody Civic Minded Students (MCMS) to understand the system they were studying in class. Since its implementation, it has become a staple advocacy program, as the MCMS discuss relevant local issues and prepare research advocating for street improvements, neighborhood watches, etc. Noyola, Jr., allows his programs and projects to naturally evolve based on student and community needs. The original format has not changed, but it has evolved into much more than a mere curriculum extension project.

This format is set up as a forum to which elected officials from the local, state, and national office are invited during non-election periods to hear students' ideas. MCMS are given time in class not only to select issues they feel need addressing but also to research those issues prior to the Town Hall Meeting. It is like bringing the statehouse to the students. Through these Town Hall Meetings, MCMS have been able to keep their local governmental officials in check by reminding them of infrastructure improvements for their area. A prime example of this was given previously in relation to the work stoppage on Greenwood. It was through the Town Hall Meetings sponsored by MCMS that the problem was uncovered; and shortly after, work resumed on the street. These meetings provide a way to ensure that students who cannot vote can still have a constituent voice.

Sonia Noyola

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated Louisiana, and some Louisiana students took refuge in the Corpus Christi ISD. Immediately, our MCMS went to work on service-learning and advocacy measures for the tragedy. There were service-learning activities such as fundraisers and drives for the victims. In addition, students led a letter-writing campaign to local, state, and national government supporting additional funds for the area. The MCMS staple events were conducted, but a lull in MCMS activity would occur during the 2006-2007 school year. It was during this time that Sonia Noyola gave birth to her son, Alejandro, and shortly thereafter filed for divorce from her now ex-husband.

After Sonia Noyola's divorce was finalized and a supervised visitation routine was established, the MCMS under her sponsorship once again enjoyed successes in 2007-2009 (see previous section).

During her marriage, Sonia had lived with the secret of a life filled with domestic violence. Her tio Javier Araiza would serve as a safe home whenever the violence became too much. Sonia would reside with him until her husband would return to therapy, but the cycle never improved, as he would never fully commit to his therapy. When she received the Moody HS teaching position in the summer of 2005, she moved from Houston, Texas, to Corpus Christi, Texas. Sonia would then live with her parents as a means of security for herself and later for her child after the divorce. During the 2006-2007 school year, Sonia fought for and was granted supervised visitation from the court. This visitation was found to be in the best interest of her son for the following reasons:

The Court finds credible evidence has been presented that there is a potential risk of the international abduction of [ALEJANDRO] by [EX-HUSBAND]. The Court further finds that: a.) [EX-HUSBAND] has previously threatened to take, entice away, keep, withhold, or conceal the child in violation of SONIA NOYOLA's right of possession of or access to the child; b.) [EX-HUSBAND] has recently engaged in planning activities that could facilitate the removal of the child from the United States by [EX-HUSBAND], including threatening to obtain the child's birth certificate; c.) [EX-HUSBAND] has strong familial, emotional,

or cultural ties to another country, Nicaragua; [EX-HUSBAND] has obtained three different birth certificates for himself (Final Divorce Decree, 7-11-2007).

As recently as July of 2011, Sonia's ex-husband was placed on the National and State Missing Person's list. She, herself, was interviewed by the Rice University Police Department to see if she had information as to his whereabouts. Her ex-husband was officially taken off the list that same summer, but his whereabouts were never established as he refused to tell the authorities, his employer (after his disappearance he simply resigned), or even the court of jurisdiction where he was living and working. For several years now, he has only provided the Noyola family with a PO Box number, and it is for this reason that Sonia tries to accomplish as much as she can during school hours for her students. She wants to physically be with her son as often as possible for fear of what her ex-husband might do to him. Currently, she is in the process of returning to court to ask for extended supervised visitation enforcement due to recent events.

These types of situations have only brought the Noyola family closer together. Alma Noyola, wife of Daniel, Sr., and mother to Daniel, Jr., and Sonia, believes,

We all have a deep faith in God. I think that out of bad situations good can come. I believe that the natural evolution of things was for them to work together more because of their passion (Interview, 12/10/2010).

All Three Noyola's

Whether it was a way to protect a son, grandson, or nephew, or just the natural evolution of the Civic Minded Students, the three Noyola educators did work more closely together. As referenced both previously and below, the annual or bi-annual staple events attended by all three groups are as follows: Austin Capitol Trip, Joint Talent Show Fundraiser, Marches & Rallies, Involvement Walk/Fair, Community Convention, and the E.P.I.C. Conference.

An additional accomplishment was a joint Moody and Collegiate Civic Minded Student presentation at the National Search Institute's Big Tent Conference in October of 2010, in Houston, Texas. This presentation was a group advocacy venture to spread the word about the civic-minded student program and invite people to attend trainings at the annual E.P.I.C. (Establishing Partnerships in Communities) Conference held on the Del Mar College Campus by the Collegiate Civic Minded Students. Although the two groups were asked to resubmit to present at the Omaha Conference the following year, monies in educational budgets were slashed across the country and the 2010 Search Institute Conference was essentially cancelled (see photo below of the October 2010 presentation). This presentation was funded through a generous grant from H-E-B grocery stores. However, most staple events for the Civic Minded Student groups are funded through fundraisers and donation drives held by the group itself.



Figure 21. Search Institute Presentation Photo, 2010

Fundraisers

Each Noyola, has utilized non-partisan donations from local, state, and national political candidates and organizations as a means of raising funds for fieldtrips. However, donations are not a stable form of fundraising, and thus an annual staple event was created to showcase student talent and create a vehicle for self-efficacious fundraising by the students. This event is the annual Moody Civic Minded Students Talent Show, which was started in 2004 under Daniel Noyola, Sr. This show has expanded to a joint Civic Minded Student event to include South Park Civic Minded Knights and Collegiate Civic Minded Students. As the major focus of this event is to raise money for the annual Austin Capitol trip, no winners are declared. Instead, it serves

as a fundraising showcase for the three organizations (see *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* photo below of original talent show).

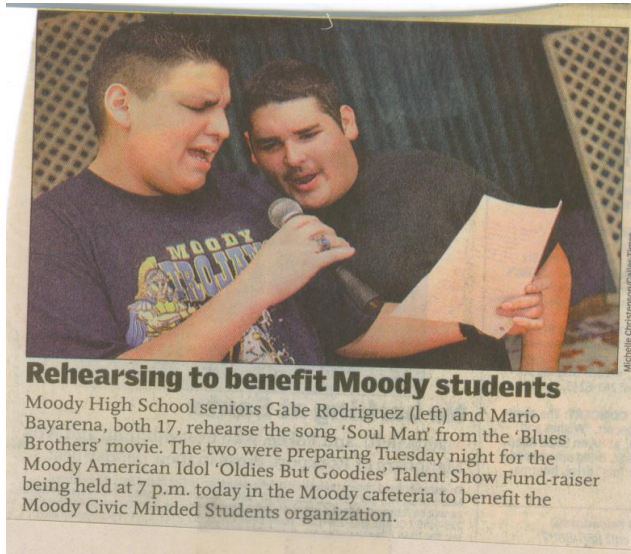


Figure 22. MCMS Talent Show Article, 2004

In addition to this fundraiser under Daniel Noyola, Sr., the Moody Civic Minded Students once sold an independent newspaper called the *Examiner* as a means of raising awareness and funds for their organization from 2004-05. Sonia Noyola sought and received over \$6,000 in grant funding to support 2008-09 MCMS projects, in addition to sponsoring several silent auctions to augment funds for the annual Capitol Trip, while serving as the Moody Civic Minded Student sponsor.

This chapter provides some of the foundational activities held by the Moody Civic Minded Students. The next two chapters will explore how the Corpus Christi community

sees these programs and initiatives and what legacies have been created as a result of the work started by the Moody Civic Minded Students.

Chapter 6: Community Observations

The following chapter will provide commentary from those in the community who have observed or worked with the Civic Minded Student organizations for approximately twelve years. The excerpts below provide insights from former students, the media, educators, and politicians.

Former Students

All three Noyola family members have discussed the fact that their previous students often ask to come back and assist with programs and events for the Civic Minded Students. These requests hold a special place in each of the educators' hearts. Many of the requests made to Daniel Noyola, Sr., and Daniel Noyola, Jr., have been via cell phone and Facebook. For Sonia Noyola, who has often been known not to use either very consistently, emails are the means by which her students contact her. One major event in which students wanted to participate, of course, was the 2009 inauguration of Barrack Obama. When the inauguration rolled around, many wanted to serve as chaperones to the Moody Civic Minded Students. One such student, Damiana Pena, wrote,

Ms. Noyola-XXXXXX, My mom just called me and mentioned that she heard on the news that you were taking a group of Moody students up to Washington, D.C., for the Presidential Inauguration! That is so awesome! (Email, 1/16/09).

In the remainder of the email, Ms. Pena (MHS c/o '07) explained that she would be taking a trip to the event as well, but wanted to attend with current MHS students. Joe Trevino, a former MHS c/o '08 student, was also interested in attending as a chaperone with the group. Although Ms. Noyola would have loved to attend with her current and former students, she was unable to do so because of a domestic situation. Her response to Ms. Pena's email was as follows:

I actually will not be able to attend due to a family situation but will be sending my dept. chair in my place. Mr. Bayarena will also be a chaperone. I can forward you the itinerary for the group and maybe you can do your flight arrangements in a similar fashion. We are extra excited because the BBC is interested in getting video from our students and using it in their broadcast. How they learned about us I will never know, but it is exciting. It is great to hear from you. Do you have Joe Trevino's email? He will be attending with the group. P.S. It is only Noyola (as I am divorced) (Email, 1/16/09).

The family situation Sonia Noyola discussed was that her ex-husband, once he found out she would be taking students to see the inauguration, immediately told her to cancel because he wanted to visit Alejandro. She was required by the court to supervise this visit (as discussed in earlier chapters). Noyola then had to explain the situation to her department chair, who graciously agreed to take her place. In the end, Noyola's ex-husband cancelled the visit and reminded her that he did not visit more than once a month

and therefore could not make it to see Alejandro. The ex-husband's mission was already accomplished — that of keeping Noyola from attending the inauguration with her students. Although Noyola did not enjoy the ability to have a direct historical experience in Washington, D.C. with her Civic Minded Students, she did enjoy a cozy weekend with her son, mother, father, and brother. And the students, although unbelievably cold (they are from South Texas, so the D.C. weather was a shock to them), were thrilled to have been a part of history. In the end, it was an excellent experience for all, and the Moody Civic Minded Students were being sought out by media sources in state (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*), out of state (*Rocky Mountain News*), and out of the country (British Broadcasting Company). The exposure of the Civic Minded Students in the media was nothing new. This media exposure had begun with Noyola, Sr., and continued with each additional Noyola who took over the lead sponsorship position of the MCMS organization.

The Press

Editor's Notes (Corpus Christi Caller-Times)

In the editor's section of the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, a section called Thorns and Roses is used to express the editorial board's pleasure or displeasure with city events. On October 16, 2000, Daniel Noyola, Sr., received a rose for his Democracy Project. The following is an excerpt from the article:

Democracy Project – Award a ROSE to Danny Noyola, former West Oso superintendent and now government teacher at Moody High School, for sponsoring a community convention to stir up interest in the upcoming Nov. 7 election. More than 20 local organizations participated and numerous candidates attended. Noyola and his students made democracy more than just a textbook exercise at Moody High School (*Corpus Christi Caller Times*, 10/16/2000).

This excerpt is but one example in a long line of positive feedback about the Civic Minded Students initiatives.

Over the years, the Civic Minded Students had been interviewed in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* and by all of the local area news affiliates. The largest news organization to contact the Moody Civic Minded Students group was the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). On January 6, 2009, Patricia Whitehorne of the BBC contacted the Moody High School office looking for the MCMS sponsor. When the message was relayed from the principal's administrative assistant to then sponsor, Sonia Noyola, she believed the contact was a prank but followed up by googling the name and phone number. Once she realized the call was legitimate, she contacted the caller with the following email the next day:

Ms. Whitehorne, I am the sponsor of the Moody Civic Minded Students. We will have students attending the inauguration. This organization is nine years old and we are currently trying to create an historical archive page of our

accomplishments. Below is a starter link.

<http://sites.google.com/site/moodycivicmindedstudents/>

If you have any questions, I can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX. The best number to call this evening or tomorrow evening would be XXX-XXX-XXXX.

The best time to talk is after school (5:30 PM US Central Time). Thank you for your interest (Email, June 7, 2009).

Ms. Whitehorne responded the same day with the following message:

Hi Sonia, Thank you very much for getting back to me. One of our producers — either Natalie Miller or Nathan Williams — will give you a call to find out more about the planned trip and historical archive, which sounds very interesting. Regards, Patricia (E-mail, 1/17/09).

Ms. Noyola sent Ms. Whitehorne and her staff photos and videos of past work accomplished by the group, but they really wanted footage of the day of the inauguration. Due to technical problems that day, the students were not able to send their photos to the BBC on time. However, just being contacted by the BBC was an honor. It meant that the organization was known because of all the work that had been done over the years. It meant that the Noyola's father's work was what lead to this honor. And now an international news company had called Corpus Christi, Texas, to find out about the Moody Civic Minded Students and their trip to attend the historic inauguration of

President-elect Barrack Obama. None of this would have been possible without the local media and their coverage over the years.

The Local Reporter

A native to the area, Ms. Serna (pseudonym) reported several stories featuring the civic-minded groups for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* during her tenure at the local paper. She had attended both South Park Middle School and Moody High School as a student, herself, and when asked if she covered these organizations because of her ties to the schools she answered,

I think that initially I went because [I knew personally that] it was a good story.

They were good stories and the kids were doing good things but it made me more inclined to continue reporting about the organization (Interview, 7/25/2009).

While Ms. Serna is no longer a full-time employee of the paper, she spoke on a personal level about what the organizations have meant to her even though she never participated in them directly. The impact of the organizations still makes her

Proud! I mean, proud for them and proud of them, you know? To recognize that they have those successes to celebrate. Those little successes that add up to a whole lot of positive, not just for the community that they live in because of some

particular project but also because it helped to shape and change who they were
(Interview, 7/25/2009)

The Professor

The notion of democracy rests on the hopes of an engaged citizenry. This principle, however, is not always the case in practice. As the Civic Minded Students groups have been active in the community, they have caught the attention of several local area professionals who have had direct or indirect experience with the group. One such professional, Dr. Gonzalez (pseudonym), is a native of the area but went out of state to pursue doctoral studies before returning to assume a social science appointment at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi (TAMUCC). According Dr. Gonzalez,

I just don't see schools being.... I think schools are very conservative by nature and not innovative and not structured in a way to encourage students to know who they are, what they believe in, and to be...to have agency. I don't think students foster agency. Because even when they want students to be agents and actors it's under very controlled settings, and it's very controlled outcomes (Interview, 7/20/2009).

Gonzales believes more schools should implement programs such as the Moody Civic Minded Students (who are celebrating their twelfth anniversary at Moody High School). Some in the community argue that having a civic organization embedded in class cuts

into the learning time that students have to receive information. Dr. Gonzalez has visited several classes as a presenter. She remembers,

when I went to the Moody classes [...] I wasn't anticipating them knowing [so much]! I mean, I knew they did some activities, but I wasn't anticipating the degree to which they knew about the zoot suit riots and that Hector P. Garcia — what spawned the GI forum, the Felix Longoria activities — and I remember being at a loss for words. And some student helped me out, and I was like, 'That's right, you guys get to learn about this history and most students don't.' That was really kind of cool (Interview, 7/20/2009).

The Teacher who Worked with All Three Family Members

Several teachers worked directly with one or more of the Noyola family members on Moody Civic Minded Student projects, but Ms. Villarreal worked with all three. Ms. Villarreal came to Moody HS after the organization was already implemented. In her interview, she details how she heard of the organization and responded by stating,

From a long time ago, and before I became a teacher there [Moody HS], because they were in the news a lot, always, you know, doing something within the community, community service projects. They would invite speakers to the school, candidates, for example, for a local election perhaps or even

representatives at the state level, which is good. Most of our students [...] may not show an interest in politics because they've never been exposed to it. But once they are [shown], they have this keen interest. They develop an interest, and usually that interest is through something like Moody Civic Minded Students where they have a chance to participate in the process, learning about government and the role of government, learning about interest groups and political action committees, learning about the changes that they can make as an individual and as a group, listening to politicians and learning the political process and having it come to them in the classroom or being able to go from the classroom to them, I think makes a big difference. They've been brought up, too many of them, to believe that, well, they're poor, okay, they're not going to amount to much and you know, believing this, you know, that they're never going to make a difference in anybody's lives, much less their own, but then coming into contact with this and knowing that they can be influential. The other thing, community service, you know, being provided the opportunity to experience what it is like to do service. The Moody Civic Minded Students provides this opportunity for them to experience exactly what it is like and why it is so important. And once these kids get a taste for community service, they forget about their background, and all they think about is how good it feels to help somebody else (Interview, 7/20/2009).

South Park Principal

Ms. Gallardo, (pseudonym) a native of the Robstown area, this South Park principal was excited by the work of the Civic Minded Knights, a sister organization of the Moody Civic Minded Students, when she arrived on campus. She recalls,

Yes, the Civic Minded Knights were here when I got here, and they're an outstanding group that was run by my social studies teacher who left, and I just hired someone. Part of the requirement of hiring them was that they would take over the Civic Minded Knights. That person is very familiar with Mr. Noyola who left, so I know that they'll work hand in hand. In fact, it was a recommendation from our departing Civic Minded Knight leader to select that individual to take their helm of their organization because we don't want it to fall on the wayside. They do a lot of service learning, giving back to the community. They go and clean up the beaches, and they go and wipe graffiti off neighborhoods, cleaning up — taking ownership of their own neighborhood, basically. They go out and have our bleachers repainted out in the football field and everything around campus that needs to be cleaned up. They do different types of projects that promote taking care of your community, taking care of your environment, being personally accountable to everything — not only yourself but to the place that you live in, the place you work in, the place you study in. It builds character. Oh, my goodness gracious, those kids just follow their leader

and themselves around in order to be a part of something bigger than themselves
(Interview, 7/21/2009)

When asked if the South Park Civic Minded Knights was an institution that should be maintained, principal Gallardo immediately stated the inherent need to find a teacher to serve as a “propeller” to continue the organization:

I’ll find them, and if not, I’ll take them out and get another. I’ll find one ‘til I find the right one, ‘cause I won’t let Green Knights die. Just like I’d never like Civic Minded Knights die and any other program that is that crucial and that significant to a child’s development — inner development. I say development, we’re not just about teaching reading, writing, science, math. That is so very important; don’t get me wrong. But we also are about teaching them truth. Truth and good and what’s right (Interview, 7/21/2009).

The City Manager/A Supportive Player

A former Corpus Christi city manager, Mr. Nichols (pseudonym), came into contact quite often with the endeavors of the Moody Civic Minded Students during his tenure in office. He was inspired by the work of civically engaged students because

I find as a country we have a very poor understanding of government and how it works. I’m always appalled at the fact that we have gotten this far as city, state,

nation through all the levels, with this, this basic disconnect, this basic ignorance that exists about, about government (Interview, 7/20/2009).

From his perspective, the MCMS forged paths by which students could become true citizens capable of operating in our democracy. Nichols was fully aware of students' participation in the electoral and public policy processes:

One of the first projects I remember were [...] the drainage issues on Sunnybrook and Manshiem and that whole area where the students identified a concern and worked to secure some funding to start to kick off capital improvements in that neighborhood to bring a safe and sanitary storm drainage system to that neighborhood (Interview, 7/20/2009)

Nichols was raised by a single mother and respects the education he received from progressive Marionist priests, who served as male role models in his youth during the tumultuous Vietnam era. Through his experiences, both personally and professionally, having lived and/or worked in Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Texas, he found MCMS to possess some similar and yet drastically different curriculum approaches for social studies courses than he had experienced in his lifetime. Nichols believes the hands-on approach of inviting speakers and being aware of the electoral process should be done in "good government" classes. He noted, however, that what was

being achieved in Noyola's class was like nothing he had ever seen in a high school classroom.

City Manager Nichols had attended a couple of the fairs and conventions the Civic Minded Students had hosted over the years. He recalled,

I always wanted to do something that would be helpful for the students, whether that was presenting to a group, visiting with them when they came to city hall, which I did. There were lots of tours to city hall and visiting with the mayor or participating in these forums. I understand the value of education. I am a student of government. At my earliest, I wanted to do anything I could to help kids understand what was important about the process (Interview, 7/20/2009).

Manager Nichols believes his background in political science, his experience as a teacher, and his service in public administration were institutional factors that made him pay attention to the work of the Civic Minded Students more closely than others might have done in his position. He explained,

One, I think that I have a deep understanding of how education influences communities in general and successful communities in particular. I have been fortunate that most of my career I have spent time in communities that had a major university, that had major educational focus. I'm one of those oddballs who thinks that having organized political involvement and community

involvement is a good thing. So, to me, organizations are good things. It's hard for the government to talk to 290,000 individuals in this instance, and there are lots of issues happening in every community. You take a neighborhood that's got 29,000 citizens in it, and there's lots going on. And how do you communicate in that area? How do you empower them to help plan their neighborhood? I've always believed that neighborhood and community organizations, whether that's civic-minded students or whether that's a neighborhood group, are invaluable ways to help collaborate between the government and the community to get things done better, because the community has to be involved and the government has to be involved (Interview, 7/20/2009).

When asked why the Civic Minded Students organizations have not spread to more schools, Manager Nichols replied,

the Civic Minded Students is rooted in the personalities of Danny and the folks who started them. So, some of it is the commitment of someone to do that. It doesn't happen on its own; it happens because somebody believes it. I think Danny sincerely believes in the value of being active. The root of the organization is to help students get engaged in their community and help address the needs of that community in a socially and politically active way (Interview, 7/20/2009).

Finally, Manager Nichols discussed his belief as to why the CMS organizations have merit,

I think it has merit for two reasons. One, I think it's an exceptional way to teach students about government and how it works. The kids that participate in that will understand government more thoroughly, and it'll stay with them longer. And two, I really think they made a difference in their neighborhoods. Those improvements were all physical improvements, you know. If the goal is to create citizens who understand the role of the citizen in their government, in their community, I think CMS really exemplifies how that ought to work (Interview, 7/20/2009).

The Former School Board Member/City Councilman

Councilman Lazarte (pseudonym) stressed that family is the strongest determining factor for civic participation. Having come from a single parent household in which his mother struggled to make ends meet, however, he had to seek his civic role models outside of his immediate family. For Councilman Lazarte, it was men in organizations such as LULAC and the American GI Forum that created an inner desire towards civic participation for him.

The Councilman's daughter participated in the Moody Civic Minded Students organization, and he appreciated the opportunities she had to be civically engaged. At the

same time, he felt that an organization such as this benefits most those students who lack strong civic role models in the home. Lazarte responded that the Moody Civic Minded Students organization plays a role “absolutely and a lot has to do with the person who’s teaching the class. You have to get those educators. A good teacher will engage a shy student and make them feel comfortable, relaxed, and value any contribution that they make” (Interview, 7/17/2009). Lazarte saw MCMS as a way to get students exposed to officials, “candidates, and or leaders who speak about reasons why they want to be in leadership roles” (Interview, 7/17/2009).

Although the Civic Minded Students organizations have been concentrated in West Side and North Side schools, the councilman believes, “everyone has something to gain out of the civic-minded students program. It would be really cool to see each campus have something like that” (Interview, 7/17/2009). Lazarte believes the more you can mirror real world politics for students, the better they will fare as civic participants. He wants students to know that regardless of their ethnicity or the school they attend, they can run for elected office. Using himself as an example, he states, “[L]ook at me, I graduated from Moody. I’m a Hispanic, and I live in a white district. I got elected twice, three times” (Interview, 7/17/2009). He hopes the CMS organizations will always maintain real world experiences so that students have that relevance piece: “I mean, live it, do it. It’s one thing to read it out of a book, but to see it, how you can have an impact and make a difference, experience it” (Interview, 7/17/2009)

Like Councilman Lazarte, all subjects interviewed, whether they were outside or inside the classroom, have said they liked the experiences they received from the

program. In fact, countless others have written emails and letters to Mr. Noyola over the years and seemed to espouse similar feelings.

Current Asst. Secretary of the Navy (under President Obama's Admin.),

Juan Garcia

Prior to his political career, now Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Juan Garcia emailed Daniel Noyola, Sr., the following:

THIS IS A GREAT PROGRAM!! At a time when voter turnout is shamefully low, I commend you for inculcating these young students with a sense of both their duty and their opportunities as citizens. Please count me in as a participant in any capacity that would be helpful (even if it's as a cheerleader!). Please give my regards to Principal Garcia, and keep up the great work. Atentamente Juan J.M. GARCIA LCDR USN U.S. Naval Aviator (Personal communication, 9/08/02).

Our current assistant secretary of the navy, who attended Harvard with and would later be appointed by current President Barrack Obama, emailed Mr. Noyola because he had heard of the Moody Civic Minded Students Community Convention and wanted to attend. An invitation was extended and the follow-up thank you email below was received from now Assistant Secretary Garcia:

Mr. Noyola — Thank you so much for allowing me to attend today's student convention. I commend you for your leadership in this project. The regard the students hold you in was clearly evident, and the enthusiasm you've transmitted to them regarding their civic responsibilities was contagious. Congratulations! Instilling in them the notion that they can affect the decisions that will shape their very lives is truly a worthy effort. I appreciate your work and look forward to crossing paths again soon. Atentamente, Juan PS: Please pass to NJROTC unit who conducted the colors ceremony how razor sharp they looked (and it's great to see the young women cadets leading the way!) J.M. GARCIA LCDR USN (Personal communication, 10/13/02).

Juan Garcia stayed in contact with Mr. Noyola and became involved in other Civic Minded Student legacies, such as the Corpus Christi Barrios Association. Later he pursued elected office and would become State Representative Garcia. While his tenure as state representative was brief, Garcia never forgot the Moody Civic Minded Students. His office helped coordinate state Capitol trips, and he attended additional Community Conventions and forums hosted by the Civic Minded Students. Finally, he acted as a point person for the organization when now President Obama came to campaign in Corpus Christi. More than 90 students attended the rally, and six Moody Civic Minded Students were asked to stand on stage during the nationally televised speech. This would be the second time the Moody Civic Minded Students made national news during the campaign cycle. The previous time was at the Hillary Clinton rally in Robstown, where

nearly 30 Moody Civic Minded Students were asked to sit behind her during her nationally televised speech. These national spots might have been the reason why the British Broadcasting Company contacted Moody High School to learn more about the Moody Civic Minded Students during the inauguration season.

The Principal (Boss to All Three)

On Wednesday, September 23, 2009, Daniel Noyola, Sr., Danny Noyola, Jr., and Sonia Adriana Noyola, were honored with a Las Estrellas Family Award from the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas. When asked to find a speaker to introduce these three educators, the choice was obvious: Principal Conrado Garcia. Principal Garcia gave Noyola a second professional opportunity by allowing him to come back into the classroom and start the Moody Civic Minded Students. He would later employ Sonia Noyola, as the first person in CCISD who was able to provide dual credit government instruction. And when Sonia was asked to teach at Collegiate High School, he recruited her brother to continue to expand the legacy of the Moody Civic Minded Students. At the awards ceremony, he honored the family with the following speech:

This evening, it is an honor, as well a great pleasure to help recognize not just one person, but an entire family who has had a profound impact on this community. The combined teaching careers of Danny Noyola, Sr., Sonia Adriana Noyola, and Danny Noyola, Jr., represent over 40 years of service to education. These years of service are not simply marked by the passing of time, but by the highest

achievements and accomplishments that can be bestowed upon educators. Throughout his career, Danny, Sr., has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. However, I must say that it is in the classroom where Danny, Sr., has created one of his most enduring legacies. As the founder of the Moody Civic Minded Students organization, Danny, Sr., helped develop an understanding and passion for advocacy among a group of students, who quite frankly are not typically known to think of others before thinking of themselves — high school seniors. Now, his children, Danny, Jr., and Sonia Adriana, continue that legacy as past and current sponsors of the South Park Civic Minded Knights, Moody Civic Minded Students, and Collegiate Civic Minded Students. After Danny, Sr., founded the Moody Civic Minded Students, he and the members created the Moody Neighborhood Organization — a group we now know as the Corpus Christi Barrios Association. Danny, Sr., Danny, Jr., and Sonia have each been named Teacher of the Year at their respective schools [and] have received numerous awards and recognition for their accomplishments and dedication to students. I could go on and on about the honors they all received, but I truly feel what is most important is the effect they have had on the lives of others. To paraphrase the words of our president, ‘Change will come from each of us doing our part in our own lives, in our own communities. It will come from each of us looking after ourselves and our families, but also looking after each other. We need to usher in a new spirit of service and sacrifice and responsibility.’ The Noyola family epitomizes the model of service, sacrifice, and

responsibility that drives true change in our communities. They are not only role models for the students whose lives they touch, but they are also role models for adults like you and me. There is no family, and no three educators more deserving, and I am honored to be here tonight to share in this celebration of their lives, the impact they have had on the lives of their students, and the legacies they have created for future generations (Speech, 9/23/2009).

The above speech brought tears to the eyes of Alma Noyola (proud wife and mother) and Lucila Noyola (proud mother and grandmother). Under Principal Garcia's administration, each Noyola was given the ability to pursue civic-minded activities. Garcia has seen the Moody Civic Minded Students from their inception to their evolution these last 12 years. When looking for others with the same longevity of insights, the next obvious choices were Daniel Noyola, Sr.'s children: Daniel, Jr., and Sonia Adriana.

The Daughter and the Son:

In looking through archival research, a study that was conducted on the impact of teachers in high school civics courses by Ms. Noyola while she was a graduate student at Rice University was found. As with many research projects, (Teaching Civic Participation, unpublished manuscript, 2003) access to subjects is an important step in the research process. Ms. Noyola was allowed into Moody High School to observe her father because of Rice Professor of Education Dr. Linda McNeil. The following excerpts are

from notes taken from Sonia Noyola's observation journal (September 2003) about her father's class at Moody.

I was introduced to the class as a Rice University student doing research. A student in the back of the classroom said, 'Rice, damn!' I believe the tone of the voice of the student who used the curse words was not disrespectful but instead showing a sign of 'wow, that's a hard school.' At first the classroom seemed to be very standard. There were notebooks and textbooks on the desk of the students, and the work being done was from the book. When I heard of all the activities these classes participate in, I was stunned to see so much workbook emphasis. However, that apparently was a function of standard work days when students were testing and/or working on assignments. When reading the local newspaper on the students' accomplishments for this year and during past years, it became apparent that the teacher was indeed a driving force for getting the students civically involved. But the more important question was did they want to be? (Archival Data, from pages 28-29 in a journal observation notebook from 2003.

At the end of each class period, I was given permission to speak with students without the teacher present. Again, I was a Rice student not his daughter, so they were quite open with me about their classroom and its activities. One student made it clear that her ability to create a petition in favor of co-ed busing was because of her involvement in a youth program (that did not allow co-

ed busing on field trips). This is an example of student initiative outside of the classroom. These group interviews conducted across four periods of his courses allowed me greater insight into the students' frame of reference when it came to the service-learning activities that they were involved in. I found out that Moody students were much more likely to have a relative (parent, aunt, or uncle) who assisted them with getting involved than the students at the other high school in Houston I was observing. While these numbers were still relatively small, there was a noticeable difference between the schools in that aspect. However, even taking into account these few students in each course, the vast majority had not truly participated in any civic activity outside of Mr. Noyola's classroom.

The students told me about the many accomplishments they had achieved as a result of engaging in the class:

“They received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the City of Corpus Christi because of a campaign for which they had created a video to demonstrate the need for curbs and gutters in the Mansheim area and had acquired over 1,400 signatures on a petition and lobbied city officials. They were very proud of being able to make a difference in their community, as they had come up with the idea on their own. They created their own television program on the public access channel called *La Hora Civica* for which they invited guests to discuss issues ranging from dropout rates to sexually transmitted diseases.

Sometimes the students, themselves, presented their own view on these topics. At first, they handled almost every aspect of the show (lighting, hosting, booking guests, and working the camera), but the students who were most committed also had many personal and academic obligations and thus slowly began to drop out of the TV program during the school year. The show recently celebrated its first anniversary, and while the format has slightly changed the main concept of students using it to inform the community about issues is still intact. They held Community Conventions each year at the school's cafeteria. The students produced a program for community members to come in and brainstorm on the neighborhood needs/concerns. The students created lists ahead of time of what they believed to be hot topic issues. During community conventions, debates were open to the public, as the students and teacher invited a host of politicians who were running for office to drop by and let the community know what they would do for them. They participated in Diabetes Walks to raise awareness about the disease (from which many had family members who were suffering), the Weed & Seed Festival (in which social service networks came together to provide information to the community on available services), and the Involvement Fair (hosted by Moody high school students, who invited local, state, and national politicians to the fair and not only displayed but also discussed the importance of community and civic involvement)." (Archival Data, observation journal 2003)

When asked about their specific thoughts on these events, the students commented by saying:

“Everything I learned about government was in this class. I may even vote.”

“The class would not be as active with another teacher. He’s like a parent.”

“He cares. He’s not like other teachers. He doesn’t force us; we are just “*cabesudos*” (hard-headed). “How many government classes do you know [that] have their own television show?”

“Now I know what is going on, and I know how to look at the news.”

“Politicians are no good, and Mr. Noyola is too optimistic about us being able to make change.” “We can make a difference like other classes before us.”

(Interviews, 11/20/03)

Shortly after these interviews, Ms. Noyola would leave her doctoral study at Rice University. She did not like the direction her program was pushing her towards, as it was more focused on research than teaching. It was at this point that Dr. McNeil recommended to Ms. Noyola that she follow her passion for teaching. Noyola took a year off to teach at a Juan B. Galaviz Charter High School. She enjoyed teaching but wanted to do it in her hometown. When an opportunity arose to apply for a teaching position in Corpus, she took a shot at it. Around this time, Ms. Noyola was not the only one who felt teaching could possibly be her calling.

Both she and her brother were inspired by what their father had accomplished and the passion he had for his work. Daniel Noyola, Jr.'s, experience with his father's class was direct. Daniel served as a substitute teacher for his dad's classes. When comparing notes on Noyola, Sr.'s impact on them, both children realized they had similar experiences. Noyola, Jr., recounts,

Just looking at the portable classroom, there was nothing extraordinary. As the sub, I followed the lesson plan left for me, and usually it consisted of book work. I don't know if dad trusted me to do much more than that with his students. Looking back now, my first year of teaching was a challenge. My classroom management was not too good. So, I guess it was a good thing dad just left book work for me to handle (Interview, 6/20/2010).

In the process of the interview, questions arose as to why Noyola, Jr., selected teaching as his profession. Noyola, Jr. responded,

When I started talking to students, I realized dad had a relationship with them unlike other teachers. I am not just saying this because he's my dad. I mean, I did sub all over the district. Dad saw students and asked them what they needed. It was like I am teaching you, but you can teach me too. It was a give and take. Dad allowed students to explore their power. It is what he did for us as kids, and

it was what he had been doing all the years for his students. What better professional role model could you have? (Interview, 6/20/2010).

At the same time Noyola, Jr., was experiencing his father's impact on students and contemplating whether he should teach, Sonia Noyola was impacting students of her own in Houston.

Ms. Noyola had the tremendous joy and pain of being a first-year teacher in Houston. Teaching in Houston was emotional for her. She was both social studies guide and mother to some of her students. It was at this point that Ms. Noyola fully decided she wanted to teach. An opening became available at Moody High School in her hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas, and she took it. Moving to Corpus Christi was a blessing in her professional and personal life. Ms. Noyola was given her father's former teaching position, as she was one of only two teachers in the district to have the credentials to become a dual-credit government instructor. Professionally, she was on a cloud. Personally, she would finally have to make the decision to leave her husband.

In December of 2006, Sonia Noyola had a son. She made it known to her husband that if the domestic violence continued and he did not seek counseling for all of the issues that haunted him, she had no choice but to get a divorce. It wasn't just her anymore. Ms. Noyola had a child and would not raise him in that environment. Within three months of her son's birth, the cycle began anew. Her then husband returned to counseling, but it was too late: the violence just would not go away. She filed for divorce. Being in Corpus Christi allowed her to have a career she enjoyed and the

familial support she needed as a single mom. Ms. Noyola's family fueled her at a time when she might otherwise have fallen into a depression similar to that of her father after he had left West Oso. Noyola recalls,

I cannot explain it fully, but having so many people depend on you on a daily basis (my son and my students) made me stronger. I did not want to let my father's legacy down, nor did I want to do a disservice to students who now had me as a teacher (Interview, 12/10/2011).

In her own way, Ms. Noyola continued the legacy. Noyola would stay at Moody High School for 4 years before moving to Collegiate High School (also in Corpus Christi, Texas) and founding a Civic Minded Student organization there. In the fall of 2009, her brother became the third member of her family to head the Moody Civic Minded Students. He came from South Park Middle School where he had founded a Civic Minded Student program. There is a common joke in the Noyola family when students say they graduated from Moody during the last decade: "Did you have the old Noyola, the young Noyola, or the pregnant Noyola?" The next chapter details the legacies left behind by the Civic Minded Organizations and plans of what is to come.

Chapter 7: Legacies of Moody Civic Minded Students

The Moody Civic Minded Student organization, which is in its twelfth year of operation, has left behind a wealth of community legacies. From its early inception, the organization itself founded other branches of service learning: The Moody Neighborhood Association (later to be called the Corpus Christi Barrios Association), *La Hora Civica*, the South Park Civic Minded Knights, and the Collegiate Civic Minded Students. Each of these entities has contributed to the Corpus Christi community in their own right, but their birth place was from their parent organization: the Moody Civic Minded Students founded in the fall of 2000.

Corpus Christi Barrios Association

The following information is from Danny Noyola, Sr.'s archival compilation of the Moody Civic Minded Students History and Accomplishments document that depicts the events and activities that led to the establishment of the Moody Neighborhood Association, which evolved into the Corpus Christi Barrios Association, an organization that is still active. The following is an archival press release summary written by Daniel Noyola, Sr.:

On September 7, 2001, a new Declaration was introduced. It was called the Declaration of Improvement, which concentrates mainly on improvements of the community and the development of a Neighborhood Improvement Planning process. This Declaration of Improvement was presented at the City Wide PTA

Councils and the Moody PTA Open House where the students received two standing ovations, respectively. Our students wrote position research papers about exemplary neighborhood improvement planning in various cities throughout the state and the country. The students (Crystal Chavez and Audree Arias) presented their planning process to the City Council in November 2001. The council unanimously passed a formal resolution in January 2002 endorsing the students planning process. The students have written a Declaration of Initiative to propose a one-eighth cent sales tax for Neighborhood Economic Development and Community Empowerment Zones (NED-CEZ). This initiative was introduced and presented to the mayor and City Council in duly posted meetings at the Moody Civic Minded Students headquarters, Room 919. The students proposed \$2.5 million for neighborhood infrastructure improvements and affordable housing development annually. Initially, the Council rejected this proposition. Last summer (2001), the Council did place \$500,000 for affordable housing on the November, 2002 ballot and it passed with a comfortable margin. The affordable housing initiative passed will allocate up to \$7.5 million over the next 15 years. In April 2003, the Moody Civic Minded Students' Town Hall Meeting created and established the Moody Neighborhood Association (MNA) to empower and improve the community. A City Council Candidates Forum was conducted as well. The MNA is now the Corpus Christi Barrios Association (CCBA) ((Interview and Archival data, 6/15/2010).

MCMS past and present regularly attended the CCBA meetings. It was through their involvement that the Moody Neighborhood Improvement Planning (MNIP) was written, formalized into the MNA later to be known as the CCBA, and today is a part of the City of Corpus Christi's Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP). Students Crystal Chavez and Audree Arias were the authors of the MNIP (see copy below).

Neighborhood Improvement Planning BY: CRYSTAL CHAVEZ and AUDREE ARIAS

We, the Civic-Minded Students of Foy H. Moody High School, wish to proclaim our dedication and support of beginning a well-structured Neighborhood Improvement Plan for our community. As residents, we know firsthand the needs and priorities that must be regarded with utmost importance. The West Side's population displays a disproportionately high rate of crime, poverty, substandard housing, and low resident educational attainment. Our children and families should be able to acquire the academic foundation necessary to increase personal opportunities, sustain a healthy neighborhood, and share fully in the opportunities available in the Corpus Christi community. In order to successfully carry out our **Neighborhood Improvement Plans**, we need the cooperation of the City Council and staff, the businesses, social service agencies, schools, churches, and the residents of our local community. Through our research, we have found exemplary model cities with unique strategies that can be applied to our improvement efforts. It is about time that we come together and upgrade our city and give new meaning to the words **unity, partnership, and improvement**.

The first issue is the appearance of our West Side community. To be a world class community, we must reflect world class. Due to apathy and a lack of involvement, resources, and priority, we allow our streets to be unpleasant with the sight of cracked sidewalks, defacement, and unattended yards. It is rare for a person to venture into our neighborhoods and not see areas with vandalism and graffiti. There are several abandoned houses that are in horrendous condition and used for illegal operations. The children of our community are often deprived of a safe playground due to substandard maintenance and inadequate lighting. Our parks must be refurbished with lampposts and new equipment.

The citizens of the West Side must unite in order to organize Neighborhood Improvement Planning groups or associations. In doing so, we can work on the revitalization and enhancement of the surrounding neighborhoods which require development. A prime example of one such organization is the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative group. This institute strives to restore a sense of community ownership and identity to neighborhood main streets located along transportation corridors. LANI is a program designed to jump-start neighborhood revitalization and improve transit access in transit-dependent urban neighborhoods. LANI achieves this by providing designated communities with seed funding for improvement projects, hands-on training in project planning and implementation, and technical assistance in the development and support of sustainable community organizations. LANI's improvement projects include installing trees, streetlights, parks, and bus shelters. This unique combination of capacity building and "streetscape" improvements has attracted new businesses, jobs and customers, along with hundreds of thousands of dollars in new development to LANI communities. We must use LANI as a role model example and create our own development projects. Such improvements could bring more tourists and small businesses to Corpus Christi, which would advance our local economy.

Our next improvement area is the utilization of our schools for community centers and the reduction of teen pregnancy. Austin has an organization called the Austin Eastside Story Foundation, which provides community access to emerging technologies for youth and their families. It nurtures revitalization through education, technology, training, and service learning opportunities. The Eastside Story after school program assists more than 800 students from the Austin ISD and charter schools in the East and Northeast Austin by providing teachers to assist students with daily homework assignments, TAAS tutorial services, and computer technology training. We could begin a "West Side Story Foundation" of our own to establish programs that will make resources readily available and provide our youth with productive afterschool programs. Moreover, Nueces County is a consistent leader with the highest teen pregnancy rates. Many teenagers lack of knowledge about the consequences of having sex contributes to these exceeding rates. The 21st Century Learning Centers in Corpus Christi and Robstown are doing their part to reach out to certain target schools; however, we don't believe it is enough. We believe these afterschool programs should be expanded to all schools to leave no student behind. It is our goal to educate the youth to practice abstinence. However, teenage sexual activity is a reality and the consequences for wrong and unsafe choices are staggering and potentially fatal. Education is always better than ignorance.

The establishment of a Neighborhood Improvement Council will be the key to making our vision become a reality. In Houston, the organization Super Neighborhoods is an initiative based on Mayor Lee P. Brown's Neighborhood Oriented Government, which gives communities more input into city government policymaking, budgeting, planning, and service delivery systems. Houston has been divided into 88 Super Neighborhoods where residents of neighboring communities are encouraged to work together to identify, plan, and set priorities to address the needs and concerns of their community. The Super Neighborhood Council serves as a forum where residents can discuss issues, establish priority projects for the area, and develop a Super Neighborhood Action Plan to help meet their goals. The people living in the neighborhoods themselves are best equipped to know what their needs are, and are most invested in seeing that those needs are met. We need to distinguish the actions of the citizens of the Houston communities and use them as premier examples of what should be done in our community to bring about improvement. We are recommending that a Neighborhood Excellence rating system be established to commend and to improve all our city's communities. Some quality indicators to rate neighborhoods could be high employment, low crime, excellent schools, exemplary streets and drainage. Our middle school Citizens Advisory Councils under the Crime Control and Prevention District are organized to improve public safety. **These councils could be expanded to address other neighborhood improvement concerns.** We are also volunteering to pilot this city/neighborhood improvement planning process with the Cunningham, Martin, and South Park Citizens Advisory Councils and others.

As a community, we must unite to form partnerships of our own to serve as a catalyst for growth and development by bringing together people, money, and resources necessary for improvement. We must strive to become a role model community that everyone can be proud of. We, united as one, have the chance to fulfill that aspiration and take part in our communities' efforts towards a world class development. Mayor and City Council, please leave no child behind and please leave no neighborhood behind. Thank you!

Figure 23. Neighborhood Improvement Planning Document, 2004

The Corpus Christi Barrios Association has served not only as a vehicle for students to ask for progressive change in their city and county governments but also as a breeding ground for those interested in elected public service. Of note, many CCBA members went on to serve as elected or appointed public officials and elected

organizational presidents: Moses Estrada (current president of the Nueces County Democrats); Maria Gonzales (current president of the Corpus Christi City Employees Union); Ray McMurrey (current president of the American Federation of Teachers Union); John Marez and Nelda Martinez (current City Council members); Pete Alvarez and Bryan Smith (former chiefs of police); Peggy Banales (former county commissioner); Abel Herrero (former state representative); Juan Garcia (former state representative and now current assistant secretary of the Navy); Nancy Vera (president of LULAC Council #4444); Elva Estrada and Bill Martin (current and former Del Mar Board of Regents); and Olga Gonzales (former president of the Del Mar Board of Regents).

La Hora Civica

La Hora Civica (The Civic Minded Hour) was a televised weekly program allowing MCMS students to communicate with the city at large on social, political, and academic issues of importance to the group. Noyola, Sr., describes it as follows:

It was set up as a forum for students — a weekly TV program where students could report what they were doing and promote service learning. Public Service Announcements could be showcased by churches and schools — anyone who wanted to talk about what was going on (Interview, 6/25/2010).

When asked how the show started and where funding was found, Noyola, Sr., remembers:

My brother David had the show *La Voz Del Pueblo* with the Lozano Lopez family (not related to Aida). We approached the general manager, Carlos Lopez, and it became a reality. I did it for three years, and my co-hosts were the students. Sometimes it was David and my son, then Danny, Jr., and Joel Mumphord became the hosts for five years ((Interview, 6/25/2010).

Daniel Noyola, Sr., believed that if an outlet for students in a media-based forum was provided, it would encourage civic participation:

If students knew their work was going on the air, they would try harder, [and] they took more pride in their work. It also gave them the ability to have power via networking and access to both television and radio air time, as we were simulcast for many years on KTMV's cable Channel 6 and 104.9 FM (Interview, 6/25/2010).

Students were able to showcase the work they had done in class and also tackle hot topics facing their communities.

An archived email from one of Noyola, Sr.'s, students, who was worried about Mr. Noyola one night, shows how dedicated Noyola was to the show and his students:

“Hey Sir We Missed u yesterday on La Hora Civica we hope everything is ok. Me Perla Theresa and Kristy just took it over and held the show (may I say it was a pretty awesome show) Well let us know ur alright” (E-mail, 1/6/03). This email demonstrated the consistency of Noyola, Sr.’s attendance in supporting students at the station. When he was not available, they were worried because he had set a standard of always being there for them. His response was actually a sad one and proof that the only thing keeping him from his students was a major family tragedy:

Hector, Thanks for the message...I’m sorry that I did not attend La Hora Civica and that I did not let you know that my absence was due to my father’s death on Sunday evening...Thank the Fab Four (Perla, Theresa, Kristy, and you — Dr. Hector) for the awesome show...I am so proud of all of you and I’m sorry I was not able to see the program...Please keep my dad and my family in your prayers...Thanks and Love, Mr. Noyola (Email, 1/07/03).

The above email communications solidified what Noyola, Jr., already knew from subbing in his father’s classes: “Dad’s students were more like family than just students” (Interview, 6/25/2010).

The show would have many student hosts over the years, but the main staples on the program during the first three years were David Noyola, Danny Noyola, Sr., and Noyola’s students. Noyola’s son, Daniel Noyola, Jr., would take over as main host the following five years. During Sonia Noyola’s tenure at Moody HS, she would make guest

appearances, but her students would occasionally co-host with her family members. Ms. Noyola's father had asked her to take it over, but she declined. At the time, she was working full-time and driving back and forth from Corpus to Austin to either take courses during the year or to live in Austin during the summers to complete coursework for her doctorate. Her brother took the program in a new direction and invited even more members of the community to participate. Students would still air their pieces, but he added an element of variety to the show and a new vibrancy with his youthful charisma.

After nearly eight years, the last show aired in September of 2010. Previously, the Lopez family (no relation to the Lopez family mentioned in earlier chapters) had donated the air-time as a public service. As a result of the declining economy, the station was now requiring all broadcast programs to have sponsorships to sell ads for each show in the amount of at least \$200 per episode or \$800 per month. Both Daniel Noyola, Sr., and Daniel Noyola, Jr., did not feel comfortable soliciting advertisers for the program, as they have always liked the independent nature of the programming.

The legacy of the show is over 320 hours of civic-minded broadcasting to a regional audience. Many students honed their technical skills (camera, editing, and lighting); their presentation and interviewing skills (research, debates, segment transitions, live performances — choirs, bands, dance groups, rap artists, stand-up comedians, magicians, etc.); and finally, college, career, and civic-readiness opportunities (public service announcements, community conventions, club news, barber shop demonstrations, constitutional law seminars, entrepreneurial endeavors, financial information (certified public accountants to answer tax questions), legal advice, and guest

appearances from professors, church, and non-profit organizations, etc.) Below are Daniel Noyola, Jr.; Mayor Joe Adame; Joel Mumford – *La Hora Civica* Archives (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* online photo):



Figure 24. *La Hora Civica* Photo,

South Park Civic Minded Knights

The South Park Civic Minded Knights was founded by Daniel Noyola, Jr. This organization was founded in 2006, when Daniel Noyola, Jr., became the youngest social studies department chair in the district at the age of 23. The organization mirrored its name after that of the Moody Civic Minded Students, as South Park is a feeder school to Moody High School. During this period, South Park Middle School and the surrounding neighborhood were routinely hit hard by gang graffiti and tagging artists on fences,

homes, street signs, and businesses. During Christmas break in December of 2006, the outside of South Park had been completely defiled by graffiti on the first, second, third, fourth wings of the campus, along with the front office. Students asked second-year teacher Danny Noyola, Jr., if anything could be done about this unfortunate situation. Knowing what students could do in mass from watching his father, Danny Noyola, Sr., at West Oso and Moody, Noyola, Jr., founded the South Park Civic Minded Knights (SPCMK).

With the permission of then Middle School Principal Cissy Perez in January of 2006, Noyola, Jr., organized about 85 South Park Civic Minded 8th grade students to paint over the graffiti on three streets in front of South Park Middle School. Paint was donated by the principal, and the brand new South Park Civic Minded Knights T-shirts were handed out. These shirts were a donation from Noyola, Sr., and Alma Noyola, SPCMK began its efforts with weekly Graffiti Wipeout Campaigns and Monthly Beach Clean-Up Initiatives at Ropes Park. This park would later be adopted by the South Park Civic Minded Knights with the assistance of the City of Corpus Christi in 2007.



Figure 25. SPCMK beach clean-up photo

Noyola, Jr., was able to provide a venue for junior high students just as his father had done with the WOMO Jr. Clubs in the Molina neighborhood twenty years earlier. Noyola, Jr. recalls:

In my second year of teaching, there was an epidemic of graffiti and vandalism in the entire city of Corpus Christi. It was just terrible. This was the same time when MySpace became a big thing, and many graffiti artists were trying to make a name for themselves by tagging their names everywhere. Young folks were doing this, and I knew our students at South Park were also a part of it. In the 2006-07 school year, during the Christmas break, we got hit with a barrage of graffiti in our hallways, outside the gym, outside the cafeteria — thousands of dollars worth of damage. They brought in high

pressure water to take it off, and two weeks later they did it again. We installed cameras. I talked with my principal, and told her I was going to do a graffiti wipeout initiative in the neighborhoods on the streets of McArdle, Gollihar, and Sunnybrook, and former Southside Park (now Mike Zepeda Park). We started off with 80-90 kids, and dad said, 'We'll get them t-shirts.' And dad said, 'Let's call them the South Park Civic Minded Students.' And I said, 'Let's do Knights,' and we agreed. We took it to George, who had done all of the Moody shirts, and he made a great shirt for us. We wanted something on the back, so we went with an acronym on the school cafeteria about PRIDE Personal Responsibility in Daily Efforts. I remember talking about this project on *La Hora Civica* with Henry Garrett (former police chief and [then] running for mayor). The next week, I get called in to the office by my principal, who tells me the organization can't be named 'civic-minded' because it is associated with the Noyola's. I said I would talk to whoever complained, but I couldn't rename the organization because we already had 100 T-shirts donated with the logos printed up. It never came to anything, but that someone would complain about the words 'civic-minded' was just stupid. We did the graffiti wipeout on a Thursday. That same week, I was called in. Several teachers helped drive students to the show, and we took about 30 of those kids to speak after the graffiti wipeout. It was great for kids, the parents, everyone. We never had any complaints after that. To this day, I don't know who complained. Students such as Stephen Teran who were with me as 8th graders and [who are] now with me at Moody, were quoted in the paper about how the graffiti was stopped because of our civic-minded efforts ((Interview, 7/24/2009)?).



Figure 26. SPCMK graffiti wipeout Photo

Over the course of three years, 7th and 8th grade SPCMK organization members performed 55 graffiti wipeouts and 24 beach clean-ups. Noyola, Jr., was able to teach some students twice, once at South Park and then again at Moody. One such example, Moody Student Body President Stephen Teran first joined the Civic Minded Students when he was taught by Noyola at South Park Middle School. It was during his time with the SPCMK program that Teran participated in graffiti wipeouts. Stephen Teran was interviewed about this experience: Introduction to quote: Back then graffiti was real bad over there, and now I go down McArdle Road and hardly see any graffiti because the graffiti artists probably think, ‘Well, they’re going to paint over it anyway.’ (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, (<http://www.caller.com/news/2010/oct/31/candidates-visit-moody-high/>)).

Students also participated in the 2007 March for Families Against Gangs and Graffiti alongside the NAACP, LULAC, American GI Forum, Police Officer's Association, and other student organizations in the Corpus Christi Independent School District. While the community service activities are impressive, so were the relationships building between Danny Noyola, Jr., and his Civic Minded Knights. These relationships positively impacted the school's academics. In 2007-08, social studies TAKS scores for the school were 96%, the highest of any local area middle school. Of the twelve middle schools in Corpus Christi, South Park is in the top four for the highest percentages of low socioeconomic status students. The TAKS scores these students obtained in social studies and the other core subjects allowed for South Park to become a recognized campus by the Texas Education Agency for the first time in its 50-year history. A fact that is also impressive is that the social studies scores at South Park beat out other more affluent and Gifted and Talented (GT) schools across the district.

In 2007, there was a 50th Anniversary of South Park Middle School and TEA Recognition celebration, during which a time capsule was created for posterity. As can be seen in the picture, students wore South Park Civic Minded T-shirts, and the South Park student council representative at the front of the stage is holding up a South Park Civic Minded Knights logo to house in the time capsule. Although the students on stage were members to a host of organizations, the majority chose to wear their SPCMK T-shirts. The students took pride in all that they had accomplished via their social studies SPCMK organization and chose to wear those T-shirts to show solidarity to their civic school community (see *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* photo below).



Figure 27. South Park assembly photo

As the following quote indicates, Noyola, Jr., is most proud that the SPCMK organization is still running:

I'm glad the club I created is still there even after I left, and I can now do projects with them: Cesar Chavez annual march, MLK annual march, Bayfront and Ropes Park clean-up initiatives, Moody Vertical Learning Communities Involvement Walk, and the annual civic-minded talent show fundraiser ((Interview, 7/24/2009)?).?).

Over the last three years, Stephanie Contreras has been leading the SPCMK organization with its efforts in the annual talent show fundraiser, recycling programs, Beach Clean-Up activities, and Graffiti Wipeout initiatives.

Collegiate Civic Minded Students



Figure 28. Collegiate Civic Minded Students at HOPE Conference with Cecilia Garcia-Akers (one of Dr. Hector P. Garcia's daughters)

Only two teachers in CCISD had the appropriate credentials to offer dual-credit courses in government. Sonia Noyola was the first in Corpus Christi ISD history to provide dual-credit courses on a high school campus. At the time, the only other instructor qualified to offer those courses was a dual-credit US History instructor at Collegiate High School by the name of Ray McMurrey. And Mr. McMurrey tried to

recruit Ms. Noyola to teach at Collegiate High School for two years. The first year she interviewed with Collegiate High School, she was asked to teach World Geography. Ms. Noyola declined the offer and instead stayed at Moody High School. Her second year of recruitment came with a more enticing offer. Mr. McMurrey was elected to by the Corpus Christi American Federation of Teachers to serve as its new president. As McMurrey was department chair, he made his preferences known to have Ms. Noyola hired as the dual-credit government instructor. She felt it was an honor for the second time since she had turned down a previous offer from Collegiate the year before. Ms. Noyola began to seriously consider the move, as it would mean that she would be teaching fewer students and would have the opportunity to cultivate other student projects not possible at Moody High School. Ms. Noyola accepted the offer but was initially blocked by her principal at Moody. His actions were understandable: If you had a teacher who was offering dual credit (and who was the only one in the district qualified to do so), why would you want to let her go teach at another campus?

After a great deal of maneuvering between both campus principals and central office administration, what transpired was better than she could have possibly imagined. Ms. Noyola was released with the condition that her brother, Daniel Noyola, Jr., (then at South Park) would take over her position at Moody High School. She was waiting for people to be disgruntled over this decision, as the Moody government position in the last ten years was dominated either by the older Noyola, the female Noyola, and now the young Noyola. Criticism in the district was minimal, however, because her brother had established himself as a premier social studies teacher in the district and as an efficient

community service organizer. Ms. Noyola now had a guaranteed partner in education with whom she could continue to collaborate. Her brother recruited a sponsor for the South Park Civic Minded Knights. Ms. Noyola accepted the Collegiate offer and formed the Collegiate Civic Minded Students organization for the 2009-2010 inaugural graduating class. Later that year, the CCMS would be presenting at the HOPE Conference (also attended by MCMS), hosting a joint Civic Minded Talent Show (Moody, South Park, and Collegiate), an Austin Capitol trip (with the MCMS), and a State Board of Education field Trip (for the first time ever at CCISD high schools).

Over the years, Sonia Noyola has been very fortunate to receive many teaching and community service awards. The process for most of these awards includes an questionnaire in which questions over curriculum, pedagogy, and overall teaching experience is asked. The following is an excerpt from an award's questionnaire asking if there is a particular year that stands out over the others:

Every year I have been in the educational field feels like the best year. I always think next year cannot possibly be topped, as this year was just too amazing. And each year, I am happily surprised to be wrong. In the 2009-2010 year, I was very proud of my students' undertaking of the EPIC (Environmental Protection in Corpus Christi) Conference. As the only senior-level teacher, I founded and sponsored the Collegiate Civic Minded Students with the same mission as the Moody Civic Minded Students. I continued the tradition established by my father (also carried on by my brother) that every senior who has a government course is

automatically a member. Students in our various classroom discussions wanted to create a legacy for their inaugural senior class. Often they are seen as being the “spoiled” students in the district. They wanted to show they could not only make an impact on their community but also give back. This conference allowed over 300 students to attend three sessions in a given area (health, education, criminal justice, social work, environment, tourism/economy, and youth issues) to provide them with knowledge from experts, activists, organizations, and policymakers. The fourth session was a candidate forum where students, after gaining area expertise, held a Q&A session with local, state, and national political candidates. Finally, the last session was a brainstorming session conducted by seniors. Students took the information they had gained from earlier sessions and planned out solutions to the various concerns in their community. The senior class used these solutions to create policy position papers they submitted to our local area school board, as well as to city, county, and state officials. Our students are also responsible for raising funds to pay for any needed materials at the EPIC conference and for any monies needed for our Austin Capitol trip where they will present their position papers. I have always wanted my students to feel as if they can be self-efficacious agents of change (Archival Data, January, 2010).

Below is a picture of the general session in the Richardson Auditorium on the Del Mar East Campus for the February 11, 2011 EPIC Conferences



Figure 29. EPIC Conference photo

Under the sponsorship of Sonia Noyola, the Collegiate Civic Minded Students organization established the EPIC (Establishing Partnerships in Communities) Conference. This is a completely student-organized and student-run conference with annual theme changes dedicated to what students feel are the most pressing issues in their community. Previous themes have included environmental protection, college and career readiness, and the importance of character, or “character first.” Now in its third year, the program has expanded from campus based (350 attendees), to district and out-of-district based (over 500 attendees). In the past, students brought in 95-98% of the speakers to discuss relevant topics for the conference. Today, 90% of the presentations are researched and conducted by the students themselves, with the assistance of outside speakers to support their research. During the last two years, guest speakers have been invited to address the theme at large. Last year, Emmy-nominated documentary

filmmaker John Valadez served as the opening guest speaker. This year Carlos Valdez, most known for his role in the prosecution of Yolanda Saldivar in the Selena murder case, will serve as the opening guest speaker. In 2010, EPIC was included in the Bold Future initiative, a joint city and county venture to promote economic growth, and political and social cohesion in the area as a means to promote leadership and community identity.

Additional projects fostered by the Collegiate Civic Minded Students organization were the 2010 State Board of Education (SBOE) field trip on which every CCISD high school was represented with anywhere from one to 10 students. Funds were raised for this advocacy field trip by the CCMS donation drive. This particular SBOE meeting was controversial because of the recent uproar over Latino representation in Texas textbooks. Students who wanted to speak at the meeting had to pre-register and state that their opinions were not representative of CCISD. Two CMCS students spoke, Alvin Buemio and Rosa Gonzalez, along with one Carroll High School student, Mia Mercedes DeLeon, and one sponsor, Sonia Noyola. One speaker who was interviewed on a national feed after speaking at the SBOE meeting was Alvin Buemio. As the following quote indicates, he feels that the experiences provided to him via the CCMS shaped how he saw the world:

Frankly, this one single organization has added to how I perceive our world.

‘There are only a core group of people that gets things done, and once they gain momentum, people follow.’ And that principle has taught me not to merely be a

follower, but a doer” (Interview, 7/21/2010).

Students in the inaugural CCMS class set the stage for the CCMS groups to follow. They presented their views and research at the following venues during the 2009-2010 academic year: HOPE Conference (fall of 2009 in Corpus Christi, Texas); EPIC Conference (spring of 2010 in Corpus Christi, Texas); Abriendo Brecha Conference (spring of 2010 at UT-Austin); SBOE meeting (spring of 2010 in Austin, Texas); Cesar Chavez Video Conference (spring of 2010); Texas Legislature (Austin, Texas); and the Annette Strauss Institute Civics Fair (spring of 2010 in Austin, Texas). The accomplishments of this class provided a foundation for future classes, and the passion they put into their work changed the Annette Strauss rubric after a disappointing third place finish for a project that had been implemented on national news the night before in Austin (SBOE advocacy by Rosa Gonzalez). Jeanette Bellmeur from the Annette Strauss Institute emailed after the fair:

Hi Sonia, I wanted to give you a longer answer to your questions than I could in a text message. First and foremost, I want to thank you and your awesome students for making the trip to Austin for the Civics Fair. And we all felt you all are a stellar group, and you are a powerful teacher. The teams who won first and second place were 1. Akins, and 2. Garza. And yes, Alicia, our intern will be typing up all of the judges’ feedback and sending it to you all early next week. I personally think that the reason you all did not place higher is due to the fact that

the scoring instrument did not address issues of activism or social justice. This is something I will be addressing, as these two components need to be moved to the forefront of the project. I hope that you and/or the students are not discouraged or disappointed in winning third place! And I hope you will consider participating again in the fall semester. Words cannot not express the admiration I have for your commitment to teaching your students about civic participation and voice!! I saw you on the news last night, Sonia, during the school board meeting. I am in awe of your work!! I hope to form a partnership and to learn from you about helping youth to become truly involved. Thanks again, and please tell your students that what they are doing goes way beyond our small Civics Fair award system. Best wishes to your kids as they graduate. Stay in touch, Jeannette Bellemeur (Work email, 5/20/2010).

Since the scoring rubric changed, the CCMS teams have garnered three first-place and two third-place finishes in the last three cycles with two of those cycles resulting in both first- and third-place wins simultaneously. The rubric has changed again, however, and no longer includes implementation of civic activity but quality of idea with relation to civic engagement. These types of accolades would not be possible if it were not for the groundwork set by previous classes. When each new CCMS class hears these stories, they, too, want to leave something behind. This year, that legacy is even more far reaching.

When members of the CCMS wanted to take part in the Del Mar College Student Government Association (DMC SGA), they were welcomed with open arms, as they could assist with community service projects. Once it became known that these students had been in the organization for over a year and wanted to run for DMC SGA executive office, however, they were blocked at every turn. Although the students not only met but also exceeded the requirements set for in the DMC SGA Constitution, the following email was sent to Sonia Noyola and Renato Ramirez (DMC SGA sponsor) from the DMC SGA acting secretary:

Ms. Noyola, I spoke with Mr. Ramirez regarding the participation of Collegiate High School Students, and I was told that because they are high school students, the maturity level is not up that of a regular college student. Also, because they are not Del Mar College students, they cannot vote on motions or travel with the Student Government Association. However, the acting officers have decided that we will have a Collegiate High School Committee, in which the high school students select their hierarchy and have one representative speak on behalf of the high school students at the SGA public meetings. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at the extension below. Thank you, Christopher A. Hernandez, Acting Secretary, Del Mar College Student Government Association (Work email, 9/23/2011).

The SGA DMC sponsor did not denounce the email, and so the CCMS students decided to take action.

The separate but equal treatment suggested in the email was not tolerable to the CCMS students. Although their class would not be able to run for the head positions, they wanted to ensure that others could do so in the future. Several CCMS members have maintained an active role in the DMC SGA, and they have formed a sub-committee in CCMS called the DMC SGA Connection. This sub-committee fought and won an appointment, for the first time ever, of a dual-credit student to the DMC SGA's Executive Committee. This act inspired talk among the Moody Civic Minded Students. The MCMS then proposed to advocate for non-voting delegate positions on the Corpus Christi School Board and Corpus Christi City Council. This action led the Collegiate Civic Minded Students to follow-up with a proposal to appoint a non-voting member to the Del Mar Board of Regents. The groups inspire each other to advocate for student youth voice and in turn create opportunities not just for their Civic Minded members but also for Corpus Christi and Nueces County youth at large.

Every year the Noyola family, Danny Sr., Danny Jr., and Sonia, feel a continuous cycle of inspiration from their students. Daniel Noyola, Sr.'s children have been inspired by his work with students and they have continued on the same path. Each group tackles issues that are most important to them and inspires the other along the way to accomplish more — not just for their own class but also for students who will enter the Civic Minded organizations after them. None of the legacies accomplished would be possible were it not for the strong foundation set up by the original sponsor, Daniel Noyola, Sr. It is with

his dedication to the education of West Side students that additional opportunities have arisen within all of the Civic Minded Student organizations.

Chapter 8: Analysis of the Civic Minded Students Organizational Impact

The heart of this analysis is history. History has created roads and pathways in our institutions and in the minds of those socialized by these institutions. In the evidence provided, we see Noyola as a man impacted by the history of institutions: the family, the church, the school, i.e., social and civic organizations. Each of these institutions serves as an agent of socialization and each agent of socialization impacted the way Noyola perceived his world. However, it was the classroom where Noyola truly found a place to let history be learned and a place where history could be made. His life did not begin in a neighborhood school but it was most impacted by one.

Schools are institutions. They serve a variety of purposes: gaining knowledge for economic employment, assimilating students into the fabric of societal and cultural norms, creating civic participants in society, and so forth. Like other institutions, they are utilized for overcoming a collective action dilemma. The debate as to which dilemma is most important (creating civic participants, assimilating the masses, providing workforce skills, etc.) will vary from state to state and from region to region. At the heart of this research, the evidence shows that Noyola believed in the process of the political system. And teaching students this process empowers them to better the cities and neighborhoods in which they reside.

Danny Noyola, Sr., believed that students should be involved in the civic world. Students know their environment and what needs to be changed. Allowing them the ability to understand the process of civic engagement and the political system is

something that should be standard in every class. However, Noyola was able serve as a guide for student ideas because of an institutional loophole within the educational system. Institutionalists address such issues as the balance between overcoming the collective action problem and still maintaining individual cooperation within institutional settings (Miller, 1992; Knight, 1992; Ostrom, 1990; North, 1990). Educational scholars such as McNeil (1981, 1986, 2000) and Valenzuela (1999, 2005) have warned of the loss of power of our teachers and the quashing of student spirit within the walls of a school. Within the educational literature, we find that service learning aims to create growth in civic participation, but further studies on this emerging field are necessary to pinpoint how to foster strong programs. (Steinberg, Bringle & Williams; 2010; Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Annette, 2003; Ash et al., 2005; Battistoni, 2002).

Daniel Noyola, Sr., like others before him and others after him, is a product of his lived and unlived history. He believed in many of the principles above, and he believed in these notions even before certain authors wrote about them in articles or books. Noyola is both an institutionalist and an education scholar. He created the Civic Minded Students organizations because he knew the power of institutions to funnel collective discord and provide the voiceless with a voice. Noyola, through his upbringing, recognized the power of institutions, among them the Church and Ernie Cortez (COPS), American GI Forum (AGIF), and the base of all institutions — the family. With these notions in mind, we can address again the research questions first posed by this dissertation.

Research Questions

1. How and why did the Civic Minded Student Organization(s) develop? What is the evolution of the organization from the founder to its new chapters?

The essence of this question can be encapsulated with the following quote from Theodore Roosevelt:

It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat (“Citizenship in a Republic,” Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910).

The evolution of this organization was and is about history and the culmination of a lifetime of institutional and generational experiences and influences. From his rearing in the Molina neighborhood by a father who expected all of his children to graduate from high school at a time when most did not to the institutions he attended on a ritualistic basis — church, school, and sports activities — Daniel Noyola, Sr., was influenced by

each of these institutions, but it was probably the American GI Forum that most caught his attention. Noyola, like others, became members of institutions on a non-volunteer basis: family, school, and religion. Danny Noyola, Sr., attended area schools and was reared by a Catholic family who attended church regularly. As a youth, he did not rebel against any of these institutions but sought comfort in their rituals. In virtually every institution in Daniel's life, he was a success. As such a success, he embraced institutions instead of rejecting them through youthful rebellion. A respectful and dutiful son who served as a strong role model to his siblings, Noyola volunteered as an altar boy in church and was routinely praised in school with high marks (he graduated valedictorian of his class) and leadership positions (he served as president of several organizations from junior high to high school).

As he grew, Noyola realized life in Molina was limiting. He saw other parts of town and began to realize how discrimination was institutionalized. It was a wakeup call for him. Noyola realized the very neighborhood that provided him institutional opportunities, in which he thrived, actually denied him other opportunities due to various geographic, ethnic, and racial factors. It was here that Noyola found empowerment through self-made institutions. As stated previously, there was one such institution in his very hometown that Noyola admired: the American GI Forum (AGIF).

Dr. Hector P. Garcia and the American GI Forum were different. Dr. Garcia embodied what seemed impossible to a Molina-born Chicano. Garcia had the highest degree possible: a doctorate. Many of Noyola's friends would drop out of high school, some would go to jail, but none of his role models in school, the church, or his home had

received the highest educational degree. Noyola, Sr. felt: “If one ever heard the word ‘doctor’ in Molina, it was usually attached to a white male and not a Mexican-born, Corpus Christi–residing, organization-founding, civil rights activist who spoke English, Spanish, and several other languages” (Interview, 12/25/2009). In Dr. Garcia, all the institutions Noyola loved merged into one great avenue for change. This inspiration provided the foundation for much of the work Noyola would accomplish in his professional and activist life. Noyola was a man who was formed by institutional influences, who stumbled in some of those institutional arenas, and whose face was marred with blood, sweat, and tears. In the end, he valiantly strove to better the lives of others. From humble beginnings that inspired others to rearing children who would follow in his footsteps.

The founding of the Civic Minded Students would take place in West Oso, Noyola’s alma mater. Due to unforeseen political and familial turmoil, however, it would not thrive in the district where his heart resided. Instead, the West Oso controversies would lead Noyola back into the classroom where his original passion first took flight. He would half-heartedly seek employment in administration, but it was through the unwavering support of his wife and the constant promotion of his son that Noyola gained back his spirit. The institution of family helped move him back into teaching. Finally, in the Corpus Christi Independent School District, the Civic Minded Students organization would flourish. This organization and its offshoots would receive local, regional, state, national, and international attention. Again, the family as the base institution assisted in supporting and co-founding additional chapters of the Civic Minded Students. The

original Moody Civic Minded Students organization is in its twelfth year (co-sponsored by Noyola, Sr. and Noyola, Jr.), and the other two organizations — the South Park Civic Minded Knights (now sponsored by a former colleague of Noyola, Jr.) and the Collegiate Civic Minded Students (sponsored by Noyola's daughter) — are still in existence as well.

The Civic Minded Students organizations are not necessarily institutionalized yet. While they have had a long tenure, their continued existence is predominately the result of a collection of related educators. Whether they stay a part of the CCISD institutional structure remains to be seen. What we can deduce is that these organizations thrived because of institutional loopholes that manifested themselves after Noyola, Sr., resigned from West Oso ISD.

Most teachers do not sponsor student organizations. Those who do often inherit an organization that is already institutionalized into the current school structure: student government/student council, the National Honor Society, yearbook, theatre arts, choir, and other such organizations. Teachers, if given the time and opportunity to mold their own organizations, might indeed come up with an array of organizations such as a Japanese anime club, a Zumba club, or a documentary film club. Once the teacher whose passion ignited the club retires or resigns, however, the club itself typically folds and thus does not become institutionalized but instead becomes a niche club that may or may not make its way back as an extra-curricular option. Teachers are institutionally constrained in many ways that divert their potential time for organization sponsorship: tenure, hierarchical relationships within the school setting, high stakes testing demands,

department meetings, faculty meetings, staff development, tutorials, parent/teacher conferences, and/or various committees and events as assigned.

What is unique about the Civic Minded Students organizations, however, is that essentially the teacher is freed of many institutional constraints. For example, the original founder, Daniel Noyola, Sr., did not fear having to conform because of his vast experience with both the educational and political systems operating in the area and his knowledge that if he was ever let go from the district he could obtain employment elsewhere. In addition, he had tried these techniques with great success decades before in West Oso ISD, his alma mater, and had data to back up his teaching methods. Finally, he was not only the social studies department chair at Moody High School, he also taught government courses, which are not subject to TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Testing). This created a unique situation for the Moody Civic Minded Students and their fledgling organization. Noyola, who obtained one of his undergraduate degrees in political science, knew the power of institutions. Furthermore, having been born and raised on the West Side of Corpus Christi, he also knew intimately the constraints placed on low income and first generation students' time. Therefore, Noyola set about creating an institution (Moody Civic Minded Students organization) within an institution (Moody High School). As he knew from previous study, an organization is a powerful unifying force for overcoming the collective action dilemma.

Organizations can fill many voids for potential engaged citizens. Their greatest power lies within the ability to continually frame an issue or argument. The ability to capture students' attention with this frame is based on the strength of the organization.

Organizational strength is based on membership. The membership need not be fully active but must contribute in some way (financial support, volunteer time, etc.). The Civic Minded Students organizational strength lay within a teacher who could overcome the collective action dilemma by providing daily face-to-face contact with potential student recruits. This daily interaction allowed additional time to build and foster trust and provided a base by which the students could make civic decisions and act upon them accordingly. Noyola's students learned about the fundamentals of civic action and were allowed to explore civic action via service-learning activities they selected, which increased organizational buy-in. Students may not have felt as if they could make a difference at first, but ultimately they found a forum through which they could try.

The longer the Civic Minded Students organization was in existence, the more students felt empowered to achieve their goals. Furthermore, the more success the organization achieved, which was documented annually via print and televised media, the more students participated in its endeavors. The evidence of this can be seen in the founding of the South Park and Collegiate Civic Minded Student organizations. Students at each school had experience with the organization through family or friends of Moody HS. Both of Noyola's children, Danny and Sonia, experienced positive feedback about the club. South Park students had more buy-in than Collegiate, as South Park is a direct feeder school to Moody.

2. What types of civic engagement activities were offered to students, and can these activities be utilized in other classrooms?

As indicated by Meier (1995), the need for adult interaction with adolescents provides a strong developmental and much-needed influence. Furthermore, based on the observations at Moody and West Oso High Schools, adult role models and their actual participation in or organizing of civic activities seemed to be the primary indicator of civic participation by students. Whether the students were receiving the push from parents/guardians or teachers, they needed adult role models as a component of civic socialization. Creating a familial environment, whether through a community system or through concerned teachers who are not afraid to discipline, seems to be essential. Moreover, it appears that when no other outside role models are available, the teacher becomes an integral part of engaging the student in potential civic participation. As the Civic Minded Student organizations show, a curriculum rich in service learning is a very motivating and positive factor in influencing students to further participate in their communities. Additionally, these experiences tend to foster a feeling of being able to make a difference in one's own community. When accomplishments (regardless of how minor, i.e., having a petition acknowledged by the administration, or major, i.e., having the city put up sidewalks and gutters in an impoverished community) are observed, the ability to sustain involvement becomes easier for the teachers. In fact, more students begin to volunteer for subsequent activities. Social capital is created and flourishes under this model, not unlike the notions discussed by political scientist Robert Putnam and sociologist James Coleman. (Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1988, 1990)

Overall, increasing a student's social capital through an intertwined process of having caring teachers (strong adult role models) and including relevant service-learning activities appears to have a positive impact on students. Outside groups (NHI, LULAC, and NAACP Youth Chapters) seem to provide other opportunities for civic engagement, but concerned counselors, parents or teachers usually introduce these as avenues for students. Regardless, the process of being involved in an outside organization generally allows students access to educated and community-knowledgeable adult mentors. Here, again, we see the importance of strong adult role models.

A return to educating the child as a whole is essential. The most active students in a classroom refer to belonging or sensing a strong sense of familial ties or community. The need for caring cannot be ignored as we move to implementing various models of learning (small learning communities) (Meier, 1995; Noddings, 1984). When we view students for all that they are and can be, we create more engaged citizens who have a choice and an awakened spirit about them that cannot be taught from a book or simply learned on a standardized test. With civically engaged students, we may no longer have to experience diminishing voter turnout or the deterioration of social capital in the United States. For these students, civic participation will not be seen as a chore but as a way to make a difference.

Based on observational data and interviews, the findings of this study are supported by the research on service-learning projects. As more service-learning activities were provided in the classroom, the probability that students would engage in civic participation increased. As evidenced by news articles, community observations,

and interviews, civic participation has increased at Moody High School, South Park Middle School, and Collegiate High School. The major reason seems to be that opportunities for community service are provided within a venue that works with students' schedules and lives. Whether this civic participation will have a lifelong impact for a statistically significant amount of students needs to be investigated with additional research.

It must be noted that several of the students engage in the "volunteer" activities for the selective incentives of an additional or replacement grade (in their American Government class). However, the Civic Minded Students stressed that they feel a strong sense of agency, i.e., "being able to make a difference," and they actually "enjoy the experience." A number of students noted that these experiences would make them more likely to participate in civic activity outside of the school setting because they feel that they "can make a difference."

Furthermore, this study suggests that the closer the activities are related to the interests of the students, the greater the likelihood that students will engage in civic participation. For example, students under the guidance of their teachers and on their own began petitions through the Civic Minded Students for changes in parking, air conditioning, co-ed busing, school name change, immigration issues, and neighborhood infrastructure. They also started protests (school name change, air conditioning, immigration *issues*) and began public access television shows (*La Hora Civica*). In addition, Civic Minded Students created videos (neighborhood infrastructure) and lobbied special district, city, and state governmental entities (immigrant issues [State

Capitol in Austin], neighborhood infrastructure [Corpus Christi City Council], and school name change [West Oso School Board]). When the issues hit close to home, the majority of students participated regardless of selective incentives. The more students feel that the teacher “cares” for their well being, the more likely students are to engage in civic participation.

Through interviews, this study indicates that in each class a group of students felt that their teacher “cared” about them. The level of caring varied, of course, as some students compared their teacher to a surrogate parent, while others simply stated they felt he cared more than their other teachers. The most interesting comments came from West Oso and Moody students who said the fact that their teacher, Noyola, Sr., disciplined them by not letting them gossip during class and kept them focused on the task at hand was the strongest proof that he cared. They reported that many of their teachers just gave them an assignment and let them run wild the rest of the period. Most students felt that because of their positive experience with the teachers who sponsored Civic Minded Students, they were more willing to take risks in and out of the classroom.

Students and even some teachers seem to want civic-minded activities, and their passion for engaging in them is evidenced by the following comments collected from recent workshop evaluations at the Search Institute’s Big Tent Conference:

LOVED IT! Presenters were awesome! Students spoke clearly and were very engaging. Overall it was very informative, and I will definitely bring this info

back to our high school. This workshop has inspired me to actually DO something about our problems in Erie, PA.

I like all of the ideas and how you included everyone in the presentation. The passion was evident. This presentation could have been longer — tell Search to get on this again for next time. Please invite me to your EPIC conference! I have students who would LOVE to see this!

I felt really inspired to get a similar group going in my school. I'm honestly jealous that my school doesn't have this group!

In the future, the ability to implement Civic Minded Student organization activities into classes may be more difficult. The originator of the organizations was in a special position institutionally. He already had a large amount of respect from his peers — both staff and campus administration — due to his vast experience and track record. In addition, he was given the institutional power of department chair, which in turn provided latitude that other teachers were not necessarily accorded. It may be possible for teachers to implement small civic activities and service-learning projects within their classrooms and then to form networking alliances within the institution or across institutions.

One idea that Noyola, Jr., has proposed after his retirement is to create a corporation that will offer training sessions and services to teachers free of charge:

I envision starting a company with my family. I will be retired, and my wife already is, but my children will continue working in the education profession. During our summers we can create curriculum and present these ideas to local districts free of charge. We can create a website where the information can be downloaded for free. The best ideas should be given so they can be implemented at cash strapped schools in need (Interview, 7/25/2009).

While he has been thinking of this idea for the future, Noyola, Jr., has no plans of retiring any time soon. However, plans are already underway for the Collegiate Civic Minded Students and the Moody Civic Minded Students to present at the CCISD Best of the Best Conference during the 2011-2012 academic year. This will allow teachers who are interested in these practices to be trained on implementing them on their campuses and to receive support from the established organizations of Moody, South Park, and Collegiate.

3. What issues were addressed by these organizations, and what impact did they have on the community at large?

Information Shortcuts

Using social science theory as a basis for analysis, I found support for the notion of using organizations to assist with information shortcuts. High school students, like the general population, do not have extensive knowledge about politics. An institution that can assist with this information gap is the school. A high school civics course is required of most students across the country for graduation. However, the course itself is meant to be informational; it is not required that the instructor assist a student as an organization

might. For example, an organization can harness the frustration of an individual and lead them to some type of action, whereas a high school civics course does not necessarily provide this option unless a teacher creates the opportunity for service-learning activities.

In the case of this study, Noyola, Sr., founded and promoted the civics (American Government) class as an organizational structure in which students would learn curricular knowledge on the topic of civics but were allowed freedom of choice on projects they felt needed to be addressed in their communities. Therefore, the students behind the Moody Civic Minded Students organization created informational shortcuts in the classroom much like the average workers in Gabel's (1998) theory, who could not know all of the nuances of an International Political Economy (IPE) and therefore used organizations to cut information gaps. The MCMS mirrors Gabel's theory that organizations are the mechanism by which people receive their information precisely because it is an organization founded by the students. Notably, the institutional constraints placed on many teachers were not evident with Noyola because of his educational and political knowledge and because of his freedom from the restraints of high stakes testing and the fear of losing his job, as he was near retirement. The Moody Civic Minded Students organization served several important functions: it helped harness the frustration that a student feels, it assisted with blame attribution, it created a mechanism by which to minimize the collective action dilemma, it assisted with fostering solidarity over selective incentives, and it filled informational gaps and guided issue framing. The way in which this organization was founded was based on the notion of trust.

Trust

The Civic Minded Student organization addressed issues of civic engagement. Noyola initiated a class club system to harness student voice. As the years passed, students took their collective concerns about their neighborhoods to city hall, the county commissioner's court, and the state legislature. The collective work of the Civic Minded Students over the last eleven years can be seen across the city of Corpus Christi. The cornerstone of this organization is what Elinor Ostrom (1990) might refer to as "notions of trust." When seeking to overcome a collective action dilemma, the main ingredient is trust. Noyola sought to build trust in the classroom through a variety of techniques, as he knew that students have varying learning styles. One of his staple lessons was that of the personal mission statement. This lesson allowed him to assess his students' writing in a low stakes manner, provided him with quick and insightful feedback as to the students' social-emotional needs, and created a venue by which students could gain trust, not only with their teacher but also with their class.

To set the foundation for this exercise, Noyola would share his personal mission statement and his own story as a boy growing up in Molina. Thus, students who were also from the same neighborhood were provided a connection with their teacher who "understood their needs." This honesty from the first day of school allowed students to open up in their personal mission statements. The act of building trust started on the first day of the class. Furthermore, as the years passed, an institutional history of the organization was incorporated into the first day of school activities, thereby establishing legacy building (or embedded institutionalization). Soon, incoming freshman classes had

experienced the organization through their cousins, siblings, and friends. It was now becoming a rite of passage at Moody High School. I can recall my first year at Moody, and the opening questions from many of my students were, “When do we get started?” and “When do we get our T-shirts?” Students came to expect that they would participate in civic class activities and saw the T-shirt as the institutional focal point that connected them with previous students who had participated in Civic Minded Students. Beyond the T-shirt, students who lost their shirts would offer to purchase them for double the price paid by the family, and other underclassmen asked if they could buy a shirt. The Moody Civic Minded Students had become an institution within the walls of Moody High School.

Further evidence of how the organization became institutionalized can be seen on the Moody High School Wall of Fame. The Wall of Fame can be viewed by application and interview only. A select group of students, not necessarily the top ten, who have proven their leadership in a variety of capacities are placed as exemplars for the school. Over the last decade, a common staple on that Wall of Fame is for students to list their participation in the Moody Civic Minded Students organization as one of their defining accomplishments.

Issues Addressed

Each year, students were allowed to explore through their personal mission statements and in-class curriculum the issues that most impacted them and their community. Students wrote about the conditions they saw in their neighborhoods. For example, the Sunnybrooke-Manshiem area is one for which students saw and experienced

personally a need for curbs and gutters. Moody Civic Minded Students told Noyola stories about their own experience or the experiences of loved ones trying to get to school either by walking or by waiting for the bus. They detailed how dangerous it was for the younger children, as the lack of curb space created the possibility of being hit by oncoming traffic. Noyola asked students to document what they saw. In a short period of time, students brought in pictures and videos. A call by Noyola's students for curbs and gutters to be installed became the cornerstone for their activism. Students whose interest lay with journalism, leadership activities, or who just wanted to see things change for their siblings created groups. One group amassed the video clips and photos to create a public service announcement presentation, while another group formed committees for a petition drive. Some students presented their cause at city council or the county commissioner's court meetings, while others reported about the issues on *La Hora Civica*. The ball began rolling, and people began to take notice. From the archival record, chiefs of police, city council members, and county commissioners invited the Moody Civic Minded Students to speak at their functions. Among the issues students from Moody, South Park, and Collegiate addressed over the years are the following:

- Neighborhood Improvement Initiatives
 - Affordable housing
 - Infrastructure (curbs and gutters)
 - Graffiti wipeouts
 - Fighting tobacco and alcohol addictions
 - Police substations

- Clinic substations
 - Corpus Christi Barrios Association (formerly the Moody Neighborhood Association)
 - Corpus Christi neighborhood improvement program
- Voter Awareness
 - Block captains training program
 - Interest group forums
 - Candidate forums
 - Community conventions
 - Get-out-the-vote pledge drives and phone bank
 - E-Slate training and voter registration drives
 - Survey creation and implementation of voter ideas
 - Election labs, research, and prediction/analysis seminars
 - Attendance at local, state, and national candidate rallies
 - Presidential inauguration trips
- Public Service Announcement Creation
 - Voting
 - Infrastructure
 - Recycling
 - Breastfeeding
 - College and career readiness
 - Bullying
- Joint Projects
 - Moody, South Park, and/or Collegiate Civic Minded Students
 - Clinton and Obama rallies
 - Joint talent show fundraisers
 - Yearly state capitol trips
 - HOPE Conference
 - EPIC Conference

- Abriendo Brecha Conference
 - Search Institute Big Tent Conference
 - Involvement walks and fairs
- Moody Science Club
 - Clean Air Fair
- World Affairs Council
 - International speaker exchange
 - Recycling program
 - Beach clean-up
- Spread the Civic Minded Message
 - Local, state, and national conference presentations
 - Local and regional conference creation
 - Publishing in literary journals (campus based and Puentes from Arizona State University)
- Extracurricular Competitions
 - National History Day
 - Annette Strauss Institute Civics Fair
 - DECA

The above list of accomplishments are simply words on a page. In the preceeding chapters, many of the accomplishments have been discussed in the context of the sponsor of the organization that undertook the program or initiative. What is special about the Civic Minded Student organizations is their flexibility with student needs and interests. Each year there are staple events for each organization Moody CMS (Biennial Community Conventions, Austin Capitol Trips, Town Hall Meetings, etc.), South Park CMK (Beach Clean-Ups, Graffiti Wipeouts, etc.), Collegiate CMS (EPIC Conference,

A.S.I. Civics Fair, P.S.A. creation and dissemination, etc.). But each year is also different for each civic-minded organization. Each year student input changes some of the focus of the organization, while the staples events remain. Overall, there is built-in student choice for projects.

The accomplishments of the Moody Civic Minded Students does not rival other institutionalized extracurricular organizations so much as it surpasses them in the sheer magnitude of its accomplishments during its short tenure. While organizations such as the student council and the yearbook committee have existed for longer periods of time, the amount of monies raised by these organizations to fund their activities does not compare to the monies raised for community improvement by the Moody Civic Minded Students. Over the last decade, the Moody Civic Minded Students have fought for and obtained well over 25 million dollars in housing and neighborhood improvements for their area and city (affordable housing compromise \$500,000 per year for 15 years = 7.5 million dollars; 18 to 20 million dollars for infrastructure improvements on the West Side; and additional monies from student-organized fundraisers and grant-writing activities).

If we were to measure the organization's civic success based solely on these monetary gains, we could easily stop the assessment here and applaud the wonderful work of the students and their past and present teachers, the Noyola's. However, the success of the organization is not only seen in mere dollars but also in the restructuring of city government and neighborhood improvement initiatives. The South Park Civic Minded Knights have battled graffiti problems with more than 80 graffiti wipeouts in its

five-year tenure, and the Collegiate Civic Minded Students have provided over 10,000 hours of community service and over 3,500 hours of college and career readiness seminars to students, teachers, and parents in the last three years. These organizations and the original educator which inspired the flourishing of new ones have become the hope of many students in South Texas. While the life experiences of the founder and the ways in which these influenced his teaching cannot be replicated, some of his curriculum practices can be implemented.

Recommendations

As current Rice University Professor, Steve Murdock, once said,

Our fates are intertwined and interrelated, and if we forget that, we do so to our own detriment. The reality of it is the future of Texas is tied to its minority populations, and how well they do is how well Texas will do (*Texas Tribune's* New Day Rising Symposium, Feb. 28, 2011).

Recently, local news sources (TV and newspaper) reported that West Oso High School cut the jobs of 20 teachers. Teachers throughout the region have gathered in Corpus Christi and marched in Austin to plead with their elected officials to save public education from drastic funding and program cuts. In this case, the children likely to be affected most are the young and growing Hispanic population. If we do not gain their trust and provide them with the educational foundation to succeed, then, like Murdock

(2003, 1997) stated, we will be hurting the entire state of Texas. Noyola, Sr.'s life work was in the depths of Hispanic majority districts where resources are desperately needed to ensure the welfare of the community and state. His passion for this population combined with his own life experiences on the poor West Side of Corpus Christi dramatically shaped his views. We might ask how can teachers, with or without these life experiences, implement some of the Civic Minded Student organization strategies in their own classrooms?

Noyola, Sr.'s core lessons, which built trust and provided diagnostic low stakes feedback on students' academic writing skills, may be easily incorporated into a number of courses at almost any grade level. The personal mission statement and the involvement fair lesson plan are included below for use in other classrooms. These lessons may always be modified to fit the needs of teachers and students working within a variety of disciplines: social studies courses (World Geography, US History, World History, Government, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, and Anthropology) as well as English courses (English I-IV). Their use in science and or mathematical courses may prove more difficult to tie into the curriculum needs and requirements of those disciplines as mandated by state and district protocols.

The Civic Minded Student organizations, whether at Moody High School, South Park Middle School or Collegiate High School, all have one thing in common. They teach the notion of self-efficacious behavior to their students. While there are tried and true components to each of the organizations, each year students decide which new

endeavors, community service projects, and/or initiatives to undertake. Former City Manager Nichols saw CMS organizations as special in that

...the interest in going beyond just understanding to recognize the value of having an impact on what you do to actually wanting to get actively engaged in the process, which I think reaffirms the fact that individual citizens have the ability to, the right to, the responsibility to communicate to their government what their needs and issues are, and [to] insist that the government respond and react and address those needs all the way down to the neighborhood level. I think that kind of understanding about the role of government all the way down to that pothole in front of your house is something that doesn't always get attention. Recognizing that activism is part of the educational process. Those things are kind of a unique part of what I saw in terms of our experience with the Civic Minded Students (Interview, 7/20/2009).

CMS experiences are not the norm in the Corpus Christi Independent School District nor are they the norm in South Texas high schools, but it would be nice if they were. In writing this dissertation, I have not been so much a critic as an admirer of Daniel Noyola, Sr., a father who helped give me life both personally and professionally. If nothing else, I hope this dissertation serves as an example for how others of the education profession can overcome obstacles and still encapsulate enough burning

passion to always create opportunities for others. This is what makes our profession the most critical in the world.

Epilogue

I was once nominated for an award and asked to complete several essays during the screening process. The following is a partial excerpt from one of those essays, which asked the following question: What event, situation, or person has most influenced who you are as an educator?

My response:

I am the daughter of two cotton-pickers who had the courage to achieve beyond society's expectations and become the first in their families not only to graduate from high school but also to pursue college educations. My parents always stressed the importance of giving life your all and the need to question whether things in our world were just. If something was not just, we were not allowed to complain or become victims of circumstance; instead, we were told to find a way to make it just. These are the two people who have influenced not only my life but also the life of my brother. Today, both my brother and I are teachers who are helping others gain skills that will allow them to “give life their all” and “seek a positive way to change those things in life that are unjust.” I would have to say that while both my parents have influenced the person I am today, the actual person, actual event, and actual situation that have most influenced my teaching career all revolve around my father.

Event

When I was in junior high school, we had a shadowing program. Everyone shadowed either their father or mother for the day to experience what the world of work was like. I vividly remember that after shadowing my father, I vowed I would never go into public education. The day began bright and early, and we arrived at the junior high where my father was a principal. I saw others my age in a school building that was more worn than mine and students whose faces seemed different than those with whom I went to school (not due to anything superficial like skin color, but something deeper than that, as their faces appeared to be older than their bodies). I made notes of these observations and, while doing so, a crisis was about to occur. Two students were in the hallway instead of in the classroom. My father instructed them to get to class, and one of the young men pulled out what looked like a 2 X 4 piece of wood from his already opened locker. My father motioned for me to step back from his side as the young man began to say expletives and held up the 2 X 4. My heart was pounding in my throat, and this boy's friend asked him to put the piece of wood away and go to the office. I became scared for my father's safety, as he began to move towards this young man who was threatening to beat him with this weapon. After what seemed to last an eternity, the young man put the 2 X 4 down and walked to the office with my father. The other young man was escorted by either a teacher or administrator away from the scene. My father went into his office to make some calls, and I sat in the main office with the secretary looking at the young man. I didn't know this boy, who was about my age, and I couldn't understand why he had done what he had done. Later that day, the boy would be taken

away to a juvenile detention center, as it was discovered that he had bullets in his locker. Now I hated him. By the end of the day, all I knew was that I hated this boy and wanted my father to quit his job. I never wanted my father around this young man again, and I certainly never wanted to see him again. Sadly, I would see that young man again. He was on the news: he killed himself in a neighborhood park.

Person

It would not be until I reached my junior year in high school that I would find out the life story of that young man. I was a member of a local leadership organization, and they brought in a guest speaker on AIDS. This young man discussed how he had contracted HIV, which was now full-blown AIDS in his system. He was one of several young boys molested by a pedophile who had given each boy he violated this disease. In fact, our speaker told us that one of these boys had committed suicide because he could not deal with the shame of what happened. Our guest speaker did not want to go into detail, but I raised my hand and asked, “Did he hang himself in the park?” Our guest speaker looked surprised, and then his surprise turned to sadness as he responded, “Yes. Did you know him?” “Sort of,” was my uneasy reply. I shared my story of this young man with the group, and we realized how easy it was to judge others. When I went home, I immediately talked with my dad and asked if he knew the story of the young man. He said he had always known. “Why didn’t you tell me?” I asked. “It was not my place to tell his private story or share his personal pain. But that is why I could forgive him for what he did that day,” my father explained in a way that made me want to crawl

inside myself from shame. I went to school the next day, and I realized how important educators are. They are more than just the subject matter they impart. They are the human beings with whom we are interconnected. They are that family away from family. I began to understand that my father, with whom I was upset for spending so much time at work, was a part of his students' family. For many, he was the father they never had. But for some, this was not enough to ease their pain.

Situation

Fast forward to present day. The Collegiate Civic Minded Students is an organization I founded at Collegiate High School to assist students with the process of becoming self-efficacious agents of change in their community. Each student who has a class with me is an automatic member. This allows students with very tight work schedules the ability to participate in activities and events, as many of our club activities are actually curriculum events that are interwoven into the content of our civics courses. Additionally, it gives me the ability to connect with my students on the much-needed social-emotional level. I would never have thought of the idea of having personal mission statements in my classes or having every student be an automatic member of my club had it not been for my father. I have had the tremendous fortune of having a wealth of experience in creating opportunities for students via clubs because my mentor and father, Daniel Noyola, Sr., founded the first Civic Minded Student organization in Corpus Christi, Texas. He also created an additional organization that I would later take over at Foy H. Moody High School. The reputation of the Civic Minded Student Organizations

in Corpus Christi is a direct result of the work started by my father and continued by my brother and myself. It is a family effort. My father taught us that the highest level of humanity is interdependence. And interdependence is what I strive for in my classroom and endeavor to get my students to understand each year. What content matters if it cannot be connected back to our humanity and the ways in which we must seek to understand not only curriculum but also ourselves and each other?

In my career as a high school teacher, I have received many recognitions for my work, but the joint recognitions are my most cherished: Cable in the Classroom - *Leaders in Learning National Finalist* (a joint award with my father and brother); Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce – *40 Under 40 Award Recipient* (both my brother and I were recognized and my father attended the ceremony); and the National Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas (Corpus Christi Chapter) – *Las Estrellas Award* (a family award with my father and brother). This was the best of all, as it was an award honoring *family*. Dad, was right — interdependence! Te amo para siempre. Tu eres mi inspiracion! (I love you forever. You are my inspiration!)

POEM DEDICATED TO ALL EDUCATORS

The sound of a voice not heard
A mind imprisoned by lack of word

The burden of a thought unspoken
The drive of a person not yet broken

Teetering on the edge of hope's redemption
Is where we try to make our connection

Only the caringly strong need apply
For there is no room for those with disapproving eye

No need to explain to one who seeks a reprieve
And no need to question those who have proven they can retrieve

A mind from distances beyond what is imaginable
Who have learned to polish souls that were always valuable

For once it begins and the candle burns
There is no greater joy than the

Sound of a voice unheard

No longer silenced by lack of word

No longer burdened with thoughts unspoken

No longer lingering on the edge of being broken



Figure 30. Noyola, Jr., Noyola, Sr., Lucila and Sonia Noyola, Las Estrellas Awards, 2009

Appendix

Oral History Research Study Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: From Class to Club: An Exploration of H.S. Civic Minded Student Organizations from 1996-2011 in a South TX Town

Principal Investigator: Sonia Adriana Noyola

UT-Austin Department: Education

FACULTY ADVISOR: **DR. SHERRY FIELD**

Phone Number: (512) XXX-XXXX

Email: sherry_field@mail.utexas.edu

Study Contact Phone Number: (361) XXX-XXXX

Study Contact Email: XXXXXX@XXXXX.com

1. You are being asked to participate in a research study because of your previous membership in a High School Civic Minded Organization. Your participation is completely voluntary, so you may refuse to join, or you may withdraw consent to be in this study, at any time and for any reason, without penalty. You will be asked about: your life growing up, high school experiences including your participation in and the impact of the Civic Minded Organization, your life after high school, along with basic demographic questions (i.e. date and place of birth, gender, race/ethnicity, free-reduced lunch status in high school, etc...). Your story can help provide us with experiences, thoughts, and interpretations on how we can examine civic engagement in our secondary schools.

2. Several previous Civic Minded Organization members from 1996-2011 will be asked to be interviewed. Each interview will be digitally audio taped, transcribed, and only the transcriptions will be made available for scholarly use via the study's findings (dissertation, journal articles, etc.). When all interviews have been transcribed, I will ask you to review your interview in order to verify its validity and trustworthiness.

3. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes. There are no anticipated risks to participation in this interview. However, you can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice. During the interview you may request to stop the recording at any time to discuss or clarify how you wish to respond to a question or topic before proceeding. In the event that you choose to withdraw during the interview, any tape made of the interview will be either given to you or destroyed, and no transcript will be made of the interview.

4. Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge so you may not benefit personally from being in this research study. There will be no costs for being participating in this study. There are no risks anticipated from your participation in this study. Every effort will be taken to protect your identity as a participant in this study. You will not be identified in any report or publication of this study or its results. You will be given a pseudonym that will replace your name on all documents. The list, which matches names and your pseudonym, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure place. After the digital audio file has been transcribed, the tape any contact

information will be destroyed. The only people with access to this information are me and my faculty advisor.

5. If you have questions about the research project or procedures and/or your rights as a participant in research, you can contact the faculty advisor and/or principal investigator (contact information provided above).

Interviewer signature _____

Participant's Agreement: I have read the information provided above and voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. (You will be provided with a copy of this consent form for your records.)

Interviewee Printed Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Date _____

Figure 31. Consent Form

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Vita

Sonia Adriana Noyola was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, on October 8, 1976, to parents Alma Araiza Noyola and Daniel Garcia Noyola. After graduating from West Oso High School in 1995, she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Government and her Bachelor of Science in Radio/TV/Film from the University of Texas-Austin in 1998. From 1998-2000, Sonia returned to her hometown and continued her education at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi where she graduated with her Master of Science in Educational Technology (1999) and Master of Public Administration (2000) while working for the LULAC National Educational Service Center as an educational advisor to the following high schools: West Oso, Gregory-Portland, Tuloso-Midway, Sinton, Flour Bluff, Moody, King, and Benavides (co-advisor). Additionally, she co-advised the Hispanic Leadership Opportunity Program (HLOP). In 2000, she moved to Edinburg where she would serve as the Coordinator for Student Development at the University of Texas-Pan American and co-advisor to the UTPA Student Government Association. Next, she moved to Houston, Texas, to attend Rice University in 2001, when she was awarded a Provost Fellowship. She graduated with her Master of Arts in Political Science in 2003. From 2004-present, Sonia has taught in Houston (Houston Community College and Juan B. Galaviz Charter High School) and Corpus Christi (Foy H. Moody High School, Del Mar College, and Collegiate High School), where she is currently employed. In addition to her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Sonia also holds the following certifications: 8-12 Social Studies Composite, 8-12 GT Supplemental, and

National Board. In 2007, the book *Chicanas in Charge: Texas Women in the Public Arena* (for which she served as a co-author with Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez and Michelle Melendez) was published. She has additional publications in Arizona State University's *Puentes: Revista méxico-chicana de literatura, cultura y arte*, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi *Writer's Anthology*, *The Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World*, the State of Texas & Corpus Christi ISD's curriculum guides. Ms. Noyola has been invited to present at the following local, regional, state, and national conferences on issues of civic engagement, as well as college and career readiness: Search Institute, National Council of the Social Studies, LULAC Convention, Abriendo Brecha (UT-Austin), Texas Council of the Social Studies, UT-Pan American, Texas A&M-Kingsville, Del Mar College, CCISD's Best of the Best, and various other organizations. Furthermore, she has had the great honor of being recognized for her teaching with local, state, and national awards: National Council of the Social Studies (Secondary Teacher of the Year), Cable in the Classroom (National Finalist with her father Daniel, Sr., and brother Daniel, Jr.), Association of Texas Professional Educators (Secondary Teacher of the Year), Texas Humanities (Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award), H-E-B Rising Star Category (State Finalist and State Semi-Finalist Awards), Hispanic Network of Women in Texas (Las Estrellas Family Award shared with father and brother), Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce (CC 40 Under 40 Award, honored with her brother), Corpus Christi ISD (I-Achieve Advocate for Partnerships Award), Foy H. Moody High School (Teacher of the Year) and Juan B. Galaviz (Special Teacher Recognition from Staff). She is a member of the following professional organizations and honor societies:

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